MENNONITE
Articles of Faith

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as set forth in public

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MENNONITE

Articles of Faith

AS SET FORTH IN PUBLIC CONFESSION OF THE CHURCH.

COMPILED AND STATED BY

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PASTOR OF THE MENNONITE CHURCH AT

HOORN, HOLLAND.

A TRANSLATION.

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BERNE, INDIANA.
1904

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Preface.

The distinctive literature of the Mennonite church, limited though it is, includes a number of efforts at a complete statement of doctrines to be held and taught in the church. These were issued at different times and under various circumstances; sometimes perhaps in an apologetic spirit intended as a defense either before civil and ecclesiastical authorities or against those holding divergent views; but mostly with the laudable desire, not always achieved, of bringing about a closer union where differences of opinion and disputed questions of faith disturbed the harmony and threatened disruption.

The work that is here given in an English translation, owes its origin in the first place to the desire for a reunion, on an enduring basis, of once separated factions in a local Mennonite community. It was afterward developed into its present dimensions in order to widen its scope of usefulness in the same line.

Though the hope of the author for ultimate adoption of these Articles by Mennonites in general as the authoritative confession of faith of the church was not realized , and while neither they nor any other similar articles ever written and adopted in any portion of the Mennonite church carry with them the same weight of ecclesiastical authority as do the confessions of faith in some other churches, yet such a reverent and withal masterly effort in the way of a systematic statement of the essential teachings of the Bible is worthy of a careful study and will prove very helpful in the imparting of doctrinal instruction in the church.

Originating in the Netherlands, these articles were written in the language of that country. In order to make the work accessible to the Mennonites in Germany and in America the late Carl J. van der Smissen made a German translation in 1849. A similar motive prompted the present translation into English. There is great need in this country of more literature of this kind being offered to the constantly increasing English reading portion among our church members, to our children,

and to many others to whom a better knowledge of the teaching of our church will be no harm. The General Conference recognized the need, and at its triennial meeting in 1902 authorized this publication.

It may be well to say a word in reference to the translation. It is made, not from the original Dutch, but from the German version of van der Smissen. The difficulty of transmitting the exact shade of thought at every point is greatly increased by such a circuitous route. There has been no attempt at literalness in the translation but rather to give the thought in idiomatic English; and wherever the language in the German was taken from the Bible, the corresponding verses or parts of verses from the English Bible were incorporated in the translation. In doing this the Revised Version was mostly used, this version generally agreeing more nearly with the German of Luther than the King James version.

Some of the proof texts indicated in the German were found in the English to lack application and were therefore omitted. In a few instances others were substituted.

With these explanations we commend these Articles of Faith in their English dress to all to whom they are thus made accessible. We prize this work, with others of a similar character, for what they bring to us of the thought and teaching of the forefathers in our church, being moved with gratitude to God for the grace given them in such a deeply spiritual apprehension of revealed truth. We recognize in these works a blessed heritage come to us out of the past when men's faith was tried as in a crucible. As a guide in our own study and teaching we value them, not as an ultimate or conclusive statement of doctrines, but as an introduction simply to the devout study of the Scriptures, the inspired word of God, which is the one conclusive and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, the fountain-head of revealed truth to be believed and taught.

Mennonite Articles of Faith.

I. Of the Knowledge of God from Nature.

We believe that there necessarily must be and actually is a supremely perfect Being, axalted above all other beings; a Being possessing in Himself infinite wisdom, power and glory, by whom all things were made and are continually sustained and governed;—this we be believe not only because of the testimony of the holy scriptures, but because we may also clearly gather it from the things created.

Leaving our own being out of consideration, we see the heavens (Ps. 19: 1; 8: 3), the earth (Ps. 24: 1; Job 26: 7), the seas (Ps. 89: 9; Jer. 5: 22) and all that in them is (Job 12: 7—9; Ps. 107: 23, 24; Ps. 104) proclaim that such a greatness (Ps. 104: 24) and glory (Ps. 8: 9; 19: 5; 104: 1—3), skill and mastery (Ps. 104; 139: 1—18), fixed order (Ps. 148: 6; Is. 40: 26; Jer. 31: 35, 36), innumerable benefits (Acts 14: 17; Ps. 119: 64) and much besides, must of necessity have an author who himself is infinitely great, glorious, wise, powerful and good, just as the perfectness of a work of art gives evidence of the ability and insight of the artist.

Considering ourselves also, we find that this is no less verified when we thoughtfully observe the ingenious mechanism of our body (Job 10: 11, 12), the marvelous qualities and capabilities of the soul, as well as the union and reciprocal relation of both, all of which

points to a supreme author or creator and teaches us our exalted duties toward the same (Mal. 1: 6; Acts 17: 27). In this we are also especially confirmed by the consciousnes of peace or fear, accordingly as we obey or disobey the voice of the law as it is written in our hearts (Rom. 2: 15).

All this, together with the concurring testimony of all thinking people in all ages, leads us to the conclusion that the thought that all things are eternal and self-existent or have been brought into existence by chance, and work independent of the control of a higher being, is so irrational that only presumptuous fools (Ps. 14: 1; Is. 29: 15, 16) or the stubbornly hardened (Jer. 5: 1—5) can entertain it, and that they do violence to their better convictions in order that, continuing in such unbelief, they may sin the more unhindered.

II. Of the Holy Scriptures.

Although, as has been said, we conceive from the things that are created that there must be a God, who in His own being possesses infinite perfections, nevertheless, without a further revelation concerning the nature of His being, His perfection, His ways and His works, His holy will, and (since we have sinned) especially concerning the way and means of being reconciled with God, we would be much in the dark, as has been generally true of all the heathen.

Therefore we conceive it an incalculable boon that God has spoken at sundry times and in divers manners in times past to the fathers and prophets and in the fulness of time through His only begotten Son, as also through His holy apostles (Heb. 1: 1, 2), and that in His gracious pleasure He has had as much of it recorded as is necessary for us as a rule of faith and conduct (Rom. 15: 4; 2 Tim. 3: 15—17).

Under the term Holy Scriptures we include all those books known as regular or canonical, from the Pentateuch to Revelation. These Scriptures we call holy, because they are inspired by God and written by holy men of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1: 21). We accept them therefore not as the word of man but of God; as the only infallible and sufficient rule of faith and conduct to which we owe supreme reverence and obedience.

There are many and weighty arguments upon which this our faith rests. Of these we give the following: (a) The teaching contained in these holy books transcends the laws or the light of nature, but in no wise contradicts them. (b) The contents thereof are altogether worthy of God and invite reverence for Him. (c) All that is contained therein serves to the attainment of holy ends; as the glory of God, the good of one's neighbor, and one's own happiness. (d) The holy writers were persons of distinguished piety and uprightness, who neither evidenced credulity nor sought their own glory, justification or temporal advantage in this work, much less could they obtain such; but their sole object was the glory of God and the salvation and peace of their fellowmen. (e) By means of supernatural miracles, fulfillment of prophecies, and many other things, God convinced them, and us through them, of their divine mission. Moreover, everyone who yields himself in honest obedience and submission to the Word of God, finds peace of heart and obtains for himself the assurance of the truth.

III. Of God's Being and Perfections.

In accordance with these Holy Scriptures and as taught by them we believe there is an only God (Deut. 6: 4; 1 Cor. 8: 4—6), a Being wholly perfect (Matt. 5:

48), a Spirit (John 4: 24), self-existent (Ps. 90: 2), unchangeable (Jas. 1: 17; Ps. 102: 28), omnipresent (Jer. 23: 23, 24; Ps. 139: 7—10), all-sufficient (Acts 17: 25), and altogether perfect in His attributes, viz., holy (1 Pet. 1: 16; Lev. 11: 44), righteous (Ps. 11: 7), omnipotent (Gen. 17: 1), omniscient (Ps. 139: 1—18) all-wise (Isa, 40: 28; Ps. 104: 24), merciful (Jas. 5: 11), gracious, long suffering, of great goodness and truth (Ex. 34: 6; Ps. 145: 8), in a word, God is love (1 John 4: 16), the source of life (Ps. 36: 16; Jer. 2: 13), and author of all good (Jas. 1: 17; Ps. 102: 28), the creator and preserver of all things, visible and invisible (Col. 1: 16, 17), worthy to be reverenced, loved, and glorified by all his creatures.

IV. Of the Holy Trinity.

This one God (Deut. 6: 4), is more definitely revealed in Holy Scripture (John 1: 18) and distinguished as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (John 14: 16, 17; Isa. 48: 16; Matt. 3: 16, 17; 1 Cor. 12: 4—6) yet with the added declaration that these three are one.

The Father is presented to us as the author (John 5: 26; 17: 5—6) and source of all things (1 Cor. 8: 6), of whom, in an inscrutable manner, the Son is begotten (Ps. 2: 7—8) from eternity (John 1: 1—2), before all creatures (Col. 1: 15—16).

The Son is the Father's eternal word and wisdom (John 1: 1; 1 Cor. 1: 24; Col. 2: 3), through whom all things are (Col. 1: 15—16), the effulgence of the Father's glory and the very image of his being (Heb. 1: 2—3).

The Holy Spirit belongs, as a divine entity, to the essence of God. He is as well the Spirit of the Father (Matt. 10: 20) as of the Son (Gal. 4: 6; Rom. 8: 9), and proceeds from the Father and from the Son (John 15:

26) as the mighty worker of all divine and spiritual things (Phil. 1: 19).

We profess that these three are not divided or separated from one another, but united and one (John 10: 30) in essence as well as in will and operation, since the same names, attributes and works are predicated of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, so too the same divine regard, as the Savior so explicitly commands to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28: 19), and as also every believer has need of the grace, love and communion of these three (2 Cor. 13: 14), for which reason equal honor and equal service are due them (see of the Son Luke 24: 52; John 5: 23; 14: 23, 24; Phil. 2: 10, 11; Rev. 5: 12. Of the Holy Spirit Eph. 4: 30; 1 Cor. 3: 16).

V. Of the Creation of All Things and of Man in Particular.

We believe that this eternal God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the omnipotent creator of heaven and earth, who in the beginning (Gen. 1: 1), in six days (Ex. 20: 11), made the heavens with all their host (Neh. 9: 6), the stars, the holy angels and celestial spirits, as also the earth and the seas with all that is found in and on the same, and lastly on the sixth day, man who is the masterpiece of all God's works upon earth (Gen. 1: 26, 27). Man's body is indeed made of the earth (Gen. 2: 7; 3: 19), but his spirit is by the breath, or a direct powerful working, of the Almighty (Job 33: 4) and is therefore immaterial and immortal (Matt. 10: 28).

Man being thus, especially after the spirit, of such exalted and divine origin (Acts 17: 28), he is created likewise unto a noble end, viz., to know God, to love Him, and to glorify Him (Rom. 1: 19—21), which is the essence of all true godliness (John 17: 3; Jer. 9: 23, 24).

Further, God gave Adam a wife for his help (Gen. 2: 18), built of one of his ribs (Gen. 2: 22) that there should be between them the closest union and the most intimate love (Gen. 2: 23, 24). Out of her all mankind have sprung (Acts 17: 26).

VI. Of God as Preserver and Ruler.

We believe that God in His supreme wisdom, power, righteousness and goodness, provides for (Acts 17: 25; Ps. 145: 15), directs (Job 37: 1—13; Gen. 50: 20), and governs (Ps. 103: 19; Ps. 104; Ps. 147) all things that He has made, so that nothing takes place (Lam. 3: 37), however insignificant it may seem, without this divine providence and control; as Jesus also plainly taught that no sparrow falls to the earth without the will of our heavenly Father (Luke 12: 6, 7; Matt. 10: 29). Yet we must here carefully distinguish between what God works directly (Jas. 1: 16, 17; 2 Cor. 3: 5; Phil. 2: 13) and what He permits and overrules (Gen. 31: 7; Isa. 10: 5—15) according to the nature of things and in consonance with His divine perfection. (It is of the highest importance to note this distinction, wherefore James says, "Do not err." God does not bring about the evil of sin, but permits, yet limits and overrules it). Above all do we believe in God's control, protection and direction exercised with solicitous care (Zech. 2: 8) and in minute detail (Matt. 10: 30; 1 Tim. 4: 10) over them that fear Him (Ps. 33: 18; 34: 7, 9, 10, 15, 17), love Him (Rom. 8: 28), and obey Him (John 15: 10).

VII. Of the Condition of Man Before the Fall.

Concerning the condition of man before the fall, we believe that God made man upright (Eccl. 7: 29) and good (Gen. 1: 31), in His image and after His likeness (Gen. 1: 26; 5: 1); in which holy and good condition our

first parents were glorious and happy creatures, endowed and adorned with exalted wisdom, pure affections and impulses, and with a free will whereby they could (under God's permission) accept without compulsion, or of their own accord reject, what was presented to them, whether it be the counsel and will of God (Gen. 2: 16, 17) or the counsel and will of the evil one (Gen. 3: 4, 5), as the issue demonstrated. To prove this, God laid upon them a certain duty (namely, first of all the law of nature written in their hearts, Rom. 2: 14, 15; wherefore God could ask Cain, Gen. 4: 7, "Is it not thus?"—Luther's translation), and made, as it were, a covenant with them (Hos. 6: 7).

As long as this good condition lasted, they doubtless enjoyed a perfect and intimate converse with God (Gen. 3: 8) in childlike love and reverence, which, had they continued therein, could have issued only in a pure blessedness for soul and body in all eternity.

VIII. Of the Fall of Man and Its Consequences.

We believe that our first parents, Adam and Eve, remained not in this blessed condition, but allowed themselves to be led astray through the crafty deceit of the serpent, the devil, or satan (Gen. 3: 1—5; Rev. 20: 2; John 8: 44) who with his angels had before fallen away from God and been cast out (Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2: 4). Our parents fell in that they, against their conscience, transgressed the plain command of God and ate of the tree (Gen. 3: 1—8) of which God had bidden them not to eat under pain of death (Gen. 2: 16, 17).

Through this one disobedience sin with all its sad consequences came into the world. We acknowledge the far-reaching effects of this in every relation, first of all, however, for our first parents (Rom. 5: 12—21). Through it they fell from their innocence and were

filled with shame; in the place of their filial reverence and open-heartedness came fear and pangs of conscience (Gen. 3: 1—8); in place of the unrestrained and intimate converse with God, a condition of antipathy and estrangement from Him (John 3: 20), yea, the wrath and severity of the holy and righteous Creator (Eph. 2: 3). Besides the peace with God they lost also the peace with their created surroundings, they must pass under the sentence of death (Rom. 5), were driven from the garden of Eden, the way to the tree of life was closed for them (Gen. 3: 24), the earth itself was cursed on their account, and they were doomed to much pain and hard work (Gen: 3: 16—19).

All this misery and wretchedness passed as a natural heritage upon all their posterity (1 Cor. 15: 21, 22), for how could they bring forth seed different from themselves (Job 14: 4; John 3: 6), or how could they transmit prerogatives which they themselves had lost? Therefore we believe that they and all their posterity in, through, and with them, have become subject to physical (Rom. 5: 14; 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22), spiritual (Eph. 4: 18; Jas. 1: 15; Rom. 7: 13), and eternal death (Rom. 6: 23), and utterly unable to be saved therefrom either by their own efforts (Rom. 3: 23; Jer. 13: 23) or through any creature (Ps. 49: 7, 8). In this miserable condition they would therefore have to remain forever, if God had not come to them in His mercy (Ezek. 16: 5, 6).

IX. Of the Election of Grace or Election and Rejection.

We believe that God from eternity foresaw and knew all things that have been, that are, and that yet shall be, both good and evil (Acts 15: 18; Isa. 41: 21—26; Heb. 4: 13), therefore also the above-named sad fall of man with its fatal consequences, which is clearly indi-

cated by the foreordaining of Christ as mediator (Eph. 1: 4; 1 Pet. 1: 20; Rev. 13: 8); nevertheless, that He in no wise caused the fall or made it necessary (James 1: 13; Ps. 145: 17) but only permitted it for reasons known only to His infinite wisdom (Rom. 11: 33). Since He is the eternal, highest good (Matt. 19: 17) and the fountain-head of all life (Ps. 36: 9), we understand and confess that He is the author, source, and doer only of those things that are good and pure and holy, and in harmony with His nature (Jas. 1: 16, 17), but in no wise of sin or impurity, which are damnable. Everywhere He commands (1 Pet. 1: 15, 16; Eph. 5: 1) and desires the good, commends it (2 Cor. 5: 20) and incites to it by means of great promises (Deut. 28: 1, 2; Matt. 5: 1—12; 2 Cor. 7: 1). On the other hand He prohibits the evil (Rom. 12: 9), warns against it (Gen. 4: 6, 7), threatens the evil-doers (Deut. 28: 15), punishes them often in this life (1 Sam. 15: 23; Ps. 73: 16—19), and finally pronounces upon them an eternal punishment (Matt. 25: 46; 3: 12). He thus declares Himself the enemy of sin, and that all unrighteousness is offensive to His nature (Ps. 45: 8). As it is therefore impossible that God should lie (Num. 23: 19; Tit. 1: 2), so it is also impossible that He should work in a manner contrary to His perfectly holy nature (Gen. 18: 25; Job. 8: 3; 2 Tim. 2: 13).

We therefore can not and must not believe that God should in His free pleasure have decreed to leave by far the greater part of fallen humanity in their sins withholding from them altogether the needed grace for conversion and salvation, much less that He should have created them to the end that they should be damned (1 John 4: 8), and that thus He willed and made necessary their impenitence and hardness of heart in order to bring them into perdition (Ps. 51: 6); for as the Lord liveth He hath no pleasure in the death of the

wicked but in that he turn from his way and live (Ezek. 33: 11; 2 Pet. 3: 9; 1 Tim. 2: 4).

We do indeed gladly and heartily believe that God in and of Himself formed an eternal purpose (Eph. 3: 11; 1: 9; Rom. 8: 28) concerning all that which He would in time perform (Eph. 1: 11) especially how and by what means He would redeem fallen man (Acts 4: 28); likewise, that He decreed to impart His love, His grace, and His gifts in larger measure to some, in smaller measure to others (Luke 8: 10; Matt. 25: 15; Rom. 9: 13), and this according to His own will and pleasure (Matt. 20: 15; 2 Tim. 2: 20), as experience proves;—but that nevertheless His lovingkindness is so great, so far-reaching, and so all-inclusive (2 Cor. 5: 19; John 3: 16; 1: 7; 1 John 2: 2) that no one is excluded therefrom without a just cause (Ps. 145: 9; Acts 17: 30; Tit. 2: 11, 12). This He confirmed by His command that the Gospel of this universal grace, love, and goodwill shall be proclaimed and offered to every creature (Mark 16: 15, 16; Luke 24: 47).

Moreover we confess that in the wisdom and the ways of God, especially in this matter, there are depths which will ever be beyond our ability to fathom in this life. Therefore we deem it best not to seek to penetrate further into the mysteries of the divine purposes, but in our confession to rest satisfied with a statement of the nature of those persons respectively whom God has decreed to save or to condemn.

Every one, namely, who with a penitent and believing heart (Mark 1: 15; Acts 20: 21) apprehends, accepts and abides in the proffered salvation (John 1: 12, 13; Acts 2: 41; Rev. 3: 20; Matt. 24: 13; 1 John 2: 19; Rev. 2: 10) him has God before the foundation of the world, out of free grace, and for Christ's sake, elected (2 Thess. 2: 13; Jas. 2: 5; 1 Pet. 2: 9) and ordained

(Eph. 1: 5) to make him partaker of His kingdom and His glory (Matt. 25: 34, 41); him has God foreknown (1 Pet. 1: 1, 2) and called by his name (2 Tim. 2: 19; Rev. 3: 5).

On the other hand they that despise and reject the proffered grace (Rom. 2: 4, 5; Heb. 10: 29), love darkness rather than light (John 3: 19), and continue in sin and unbelief (John 3: 18)—these He has ordained to eternal destruction from His face (2 Thess. 1: 9) by reason of their own wilful wickedness (Matt. 23: 37; Prov. 1: 24—32) as those that thrust from them the Word and judge themselves unworthy of eternal life (Acts 13: 46). Seeing they despise the Lord's supper to which they were invited they shall never taste of it (Luke 14: 24).

X. Of Man's Restoration.

Since God purposed even from the foundation of the world to redeem fallen man through His Son Jesus Christ, as above set forth, He in His goodness did not leave him long in his hopeless condition, but revealed unto him, immediately after the fall, His purpose of grace by the promise of a redeemer, who as the seed of the woman should crush the serpent's head, although it should bruise His heel. (This promise, mysterious as it may seem, is the basis of all succeeding promises, Gen. 3: 15).

This, together with many other evidences of God's goodness, gave our first parents such a great consolation that they could perceive how that by faith in God's promises, in a sincere conversion to Him, grace and salvation could be obtained (Heb. 11: 4). (It seems that Eve already at the birth of Cain drew comfort from this hope, Gen. 4: 1). Thus through the inestimable grace of God in Christ, revealed to them as above stated, there was given to them, in distinction from the fallen

angels, the possibility and hope of being restored to blessedness, and with them to all their posterity in so far as these would not cut themselves off by their own guilt and the rejection of God's grace.

This revelation of His grace in and through the promise of a redeemer, was renewed and confirmed both to the devout patriarchs (Gen. 12: 2, 3) and through all the prophets (Luke 1: 70; 24: 27) as also by means of many symbols and types (Heb. 9: 8—10), in order that they should exercise faith in this coming Messiah (1 Pet. 1: 10, 11), wait with confidence for their redemption through Him (Rom. 4: 20), and look forward to the same with desire (Luke 10: 24) as many among them did in a remarkable manner (John 8: 56).

XI. Of Man's Freedom and Ability after the Fall.

Regarding man's free agency, we believe, that however great may be the loss and the ruin that have come upon mankind through the fall in sin (as set forth in Art. IX), yet through God's grace the light of reason and of conscience has not been wholly quenched, as we are taught by Holy Scripture (Rom. 1: 19—21; 2: 1—15) as well as by experience; further, that man still left in the position of a free agent, can either by and through the power of the grace of restoration accept or else reject the divine instruction and the good offered by God in His Son Jesus Christ—that he can incline in a degree his heart unto them, or turn away and withdraw himself from them (Deut. 11: 26—28; 30: 15—20). This freedom is so essential to the nature of a rational being that without it his actions could not be reasonably judged as good or bad, nor could they, if virtuous, deserve reward, or if sinful, come under righteous condemnation, which, however, is most certainly the case with man.

For this reason we acknowledge, that, although without God's prevenient grace it is entirely impossible for our corrupt nature to seek, choose and apprehend the good, and even if the universal gift of divine grace alone arouses and assists our nature, these acts still come very hard and are possible only in a rudimentary way,—yet they must, nevertheless, not be considered as wholly impossible, but rather as actually possible, in a way since the Lord our God certainly deals with us so that, on the one hand, He holds out to us commands (Ex. 20: 3—17; Matt. 17: 5), counsel (Rev. 3: 18), motives (Isa. 55: 1—7; 2 Cor. 5: 11, 18—21; 6: 1), promises (Isa. 55; Matt. 11: 28, 29; 2 Cor. 6: 17, 18), blessings for good undertakings (Isa. 45: 22; Luke 18: 29, 30), and finally an eternal reward (Matt. 25), but on the other hand, warning (Gen. 4: 6, 7; 1 Cor. 10: 11), threatenings (Deut. 27: 26), chastisements (Heb. 12: 5—11; 1 Pet. 1: 6, 7; Rev. 3: 19), and terrible judgments (Deut. 28: 15; 29: 19, 20) both temporal (Isa. 29: 13—15) and eternal (Matt. 25: 46); all of which would otherwise seem strange and inconsistent (Deut. 32: 3, 4).

However, from what has thus far been said in a general way, we must be careful not to draw the conclusion that man is as capable to use his free agency aright in spiritual things as he is in natural things (Luke 12: 54–57). Far be it! The contrary is plainly taught not only by the Holy Scripture (1 Cor. 2: 14), but also by reason and our daily experience (Matt. 7: 13).

For this reason we conclude that ordinary impulses in the direction of good, moving simply on the plane of reason, must be carefully distinguished from those that are spiritual, far more powerful (Ezek. 36: 25—27), and special (Rom. 9: 12—18); that the former, nevertheless, are sufficient to awaken in us certain incipient longings (Prov. 2: 4—7), and that such seeking is the God-or-

dained way to obtain more (1 Chron. 28: 9; Prov. 8: 17; Matt. 7: 7) yet by grace (Isa. 55: 7); that, accordingly, fallen man, to whom grace has come (Micah 6: 8; Rev. 3: 20), has still the ability left to him to take to heart more or less the general promptings of grace, to prove them, to adapt himself to them, and wait for more grace (Ps. 37: 24; 27: 14; Isa. 40: 31; Lam. 3: 24, 25). (See further Art. 17).

XII. Of the Person of the Redeemer and His Appearing in the Flesh.

When the time was fulfilled (Gal. 4: 4) of which the prophets had spoken (Gen. 49: 10; Dan. 9: 24). God let His Son proceed forth from Himself (John 8: 42; 16: 28) and sent Him into the world (John 6: 38), into the womb of a highly favored virgin named Mary (Luke 1: 27, 28), where and by whom He (the seed of the woman, Gen. 3: 15; of Abraham, Gal. 3: 16—19; of David, Rom. 1: 3) was conceived through divine quickening and overshadowing of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1: 35); became partaker of flesh and blood, and was made like unto us in all things yet without sin (Heb. 2: 14—17; 4: 15), in that in the natural course of time He was born of her, as it was written, in Bethlehem (Luke 2: 11; Micah 5: 1), and was called Jesus because He should save His people from their sins (Matt. 1: 21).

This Jesus, born of Mary in Bethlehem and brought up in Nazareth (Matt. 2: 23), is the one whom we confess to be Christ, the Son of the living God (Matt. 16: 16) the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1: 14), the Word which was with God and was God (John 1: 1; Gen. 1: 3, 1 John 1: 1), and became flesh (John 1: 14; Gal. 4, 4; Phil. 2: 7—11). Not as though the divine essence of the eternal Word had been changed to visible, mortal flesh or a visible man (Heb.

1: 8–12), and had ceased to be Spirit, Divinity or God (1 Tim. 3: 16), but so, that the eternal Son of God (Micah 5: 2) continued to be what He was before (John 3: 13; Col. 1: 17; Rev. 22: 13), namely God (Rom. 9: 5) and Spirit (2 Cor. 3: 17; 1 Cor. 15: 45—47), and became what He was not, namely flesh or man.

Therefore we confess that Jesus is our Immanuel, true God and man in one person (Col. 2: 9; 1 Tim. 3: 16), and thus qualified and fitted to be a redeemer and the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2: 1, 2).

XIII. Of the Work of Redemption in General.

The great purpose for which God the Father out of His infinite love to man thus gave His Son Jesus Christ (John 3: 16; Rom. 5), and to which end the Son of God willingly humbled Himself (Eph. 5: 2; Phil. 2: 7), was to reconcile unto God the world lost in sin, (2 Cor. 5: 19), to redeem it (Heb. 2: 15, 17) and to save it (1 Tim. 1: 15).

To accomplish fully this great work committed to Him of the Father (John 17: 4), for which, according to the divine purpose and preordination He was anointed and set apart even before the foundation of the world, and which out of pure love and obedience He took upon Himself (Heb. 10: 4; 9: 10), He must be first put under the law (Gal. 4: 4, 5) that by a perfect obedience He might fulfill all its demands (Matt. 5: 17—18); and this He actually did (John 17: 4).

Having lived a holy and spotless life (Heb. 7: 26; 1 Pet. 2: 22, 23) to the age of about thirty years (Luke 3: 23), fully satisfying in this respect the will and pleasure of the Father, He received a public approval from heaven (Matt. 3: 16, 17) and was as to His human nature also anointed and endowed in an especial manner with the Holy Ghost from God the Father (Acts 10: 38) to

carry out the momentous work of salvation (Col. 1: 19, 20), in which He as our mediator (1 Tim. 2: 5; Heb. 9: 15; 12: 24) approved Himself in the exalted threefold capacity as a prophet (Luke 24: 19), high priest (Heb. 10: 21) and king (John 12: 15; 18: 37), whom God had promised to send into the world, and whom we must hear (Deut. 18: 15—18), believe (John 3: 16; 6: 40, 47), and obey (John 8: 12; 10: 27—30), as will be more fully shown in the following chapters.

XIV. Of Christ's Office as Prophet.

After the Son of God had been solemnly anointed and had passed victoriously through sundry hellish temptations (Luke 4: 1—13; Mark 1: 12–15, 22) He presented Himself at once to the world (Matt. 4: 17) as the great prophet (Luke 7: 16) who had been promised of God (Acts 3: 22, 23; Deut. 18: 15, 18), in that He taught the way of God in truth (Matt. 22: 16) as one who had authority (Mark 1: 22) and with a wisdom (Matt. 13: 54) which no one could withstand; preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, repentance and faith (Mark 1: 14, 15); testified likewise how one must walk to be pleasing to God (Matt. 5:3—12), foretold also things to come (Matt. 20: 18, 19; 21: 2; 24: 2); and confirmed it all with many wonderful miracles (Matt. 11: 5). Moreover, He lived just as He taught (John 8: 46) and has thus left us both in His teaching and His life an example which we are to follow (1 Pet. 2: 21).

Further, as the Lord Christ taught and led His people under the old covenant as the Angel of God's presence, through Moses and all the prophets, in whom His Spirit was, and as He now did the same in His own person, so He continued His teaching office through His Apostles and Evangelists (Eph. 4: 11; Luke 10: 1—17), whom He called (Luke 9: 1—6), instructed (Acts 1: 2,

3), endowed with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1: 8; 2: 1—4), and sent forth (John 20: 21) to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth (Acts 1: 8). And these were faithful even unto death and kept back nothing that is profitable (Acts 20: 20, 24) but declared the whole counsel of God unto salvation, to which God also bore witness by signs and wonders and by manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will (Heb. 2: 4).

The Lord Jesus also continues His work as teacher by means of His holy word, seeing He has given a short yet sufficiently complete account of His holy life and divine teaching as well as of those of His holy Apostles to be transmitted in the books of the New Testament, in which together with the books of the Old Testament there is included everything needful to a rule of faith and life (See Art. 2). Through the teaching, reading, and hearing of this word He continues to bring about faith, conversion, and sanctification, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth (Rom. 1: 16).

Finally the Lord Jesus teaches also through the Spirit according to His promise, both convincing and winning the unbelieving, and leading the believers into all truth (John 16: 13). In this work the Spirit never contradicts the true meaning of the written word, (Jas. 3: 11; 1: 17) but enlightens the believer's mind to a right understanding of the word (Luke 24: 45) gives them assurance of its truth, and brings to remembrance the things that the Lord has spoken (John 14: 26).

It is therefore necessary to prove the spirits whether they are of God (1 John 4: 1) and to hold fast to the unerring word of God (2 Tim. 3: 14—17; 2 Pet. 1: 19—21) concerning which we have received assurance and know who has taught us the same (Gal. 1: 6—12).

XV. Of Christ as High Priest.

As the true high priest (Heb. 4: 14) and only mediator of the new and eternal covenant (1 Tim. 2: 5), Christ prayed to His heavenly father for His apostles and also for them that should believe on Him through their word (John 17: 9, 20), yea even for those who crucified Him and would take His life (Luke 23: 34).

Moreover He obediently took upon Himself the most grievous suffering (Phil. 2: 8) and offered Himself through the eternal Spirit without blemish unto God (Heb. 9: 14), both in soul and body, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (Heb. 2: 17; 7: 26, 27). We believe that this most bitter suffering of soul as well as of body, begun in Gethsemane and finished on Calvary, is an offering whose efficacy is eternal (Heb. 9: 12; Isa. 53) and by which He has perfected forever them that come to God through Him, are obedient to Him, and are sanctified (Heb. 10: 14). We take the obedience of the Son of God, His precious suffering, shed blood, and sacrificial death on the cross once for all (1 Pet. 2: 24) to be the ransom (Matt. 20: 28; 1 Tim. 2: 6) or price (Heb. 9: 13, 14) of our redemption, all-sufficient for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2: 2); through which, accordingly, all who truly believe on Him, are reconciled with God (2 Cor. 5: 19—21), are brought into a condition of peace, and attain unto a well grounded hope and assurance of eternal life (Rom. 5: 1, 5, 9, 10).

Now when the Lord Jesus Christ had finished His high-priestly work upon earth through His death, He was buried and on the third day rose again from the dead and appeared unto the apostles and many others (1 Cor. 15) with many infallible proofs by the space of forty days (Acts 1: 3, 9—12). Thereafter He ascended into heaven as a triumphant victor (Eph. 4: 8; Col. 2:

15) before the eyes of all His faithful apostles (Luke 24: 50—52) and sat down at the right hand of the Father (Mark 16: 19) crowned with honor and glory (Heb. 2: 9; John 17: 5).

There, and thus clothed, He continues His holy office as our high priest (Heb. 8: 1). For as He is the servant of the true tabernacle, He has entered not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood once into heaven itself (Heb. 9: 11, 24) to appear before the face of God in behalf of the believers. Wherefore He is called of God a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek (Heb. 5: 10; Ps. 110: 4) to the great comfort of the believers in their infirmities (Heb. 4: 14—16). And as He has an everlasting priesthood, since He abides forever, He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God through Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them (Heb. 7: 24, 25; 1 John 2; 1, 2).

Lastly, as it was the part of the high priest, after completing the offering of atonement, to return to the waiting and praying people to bless them, so Christ the great High Priest is continually bestowing upon His own the fruit, the power, and the sufficiency of His sacrifice that they may benefit by them (Acts 3: 26). Having the power and the right to forgive sins (Mark 2: 10; Matt. 28: 18), He grants this blessing to the penitent (Acts 5: 31); through His blood of sprinkling He purges the conscience from dead works (Heb. 9: 14) and thus gives boldness and confidence to draw nigh unto God (Eph. 3: 12). He baptizes them with His Spirit (John 1: 33), holds spiritual and intimate communion with them (Rev. 3: 20; John 14: 21—23), yea, and he makes His holy and redeemed people themselves to be a royal priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God (1 Pet. 2: 5, 9).

From all this follows self-evidently that the Levitical priesthood (Heb. 10: 5—9), and with it the whole ceremonial law, has been fulfilled, has come to an end, and has been abolished. The law had only the shadow of good things to come (Heb. 10: 1) and it ended in Christ (Rom. 10: 4) to whom be glory forever. Amen!

XVI. Of Christ as King.

The Lord Jesus Christ as the one promised and heavenly king of the new covenant (Ps. 2: 6; Jer. 23: 5; Luke 1: 32, 33), having by His glorious resurrection proved Himself victor over the devil, over death and the grave, (Col. 2: 15; 2 Tim. 1: 10; Heb. 2: 14, 15) at once began to set up and order His spiritual kingdom when He gave His apostles command and instruction as to how the same should be established (Matt. 28: 19, 20: Mark 16: 15; Luke 24: 47); yet more especially when he ascended on high (Eph. 4: 8), entered into His glory (Luke 24: 26), and sat down on the right hand of His Father in heaven (Heb. 1: 3), of which He gave the strongest proof when on the day of Pentecost He poured forth abundantly the Holy Spirit upon His apostles (Acts 2: 33—36).

Thenceforth the kingdom of God came with power, so that from that day on, through the instrumentality of the apostles, great numbers of believing and spiritually minded people were gathered (Acts 2: 41, 47; 4: 32, 33) who confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2: 9—11).

The spiritual kingdom, generally called the kingdom of heaven, the Lord Jesus has committed in part to His servants here on earth to administer according to the spiritual laws of His kingdom (Eph. 4: 11, 12; 1 Pet. 5: 1—4). Yet above all and in particular He Himself administers the same direct from heaven. He rules the

hearts of His people through the Holy Spirit (John 16: 13; 14: 26), in accordance with His word, with passionate love; He protects and shelters them as under His wings, equips them with spiritual weapons against His and their enemies (Eph. 6: 11—18), and is to them a very present help in trouble so that in Him they are more than conquerors (Rom. 8: 37); He prepares for them a place in heaven (John 14: 2) and will by grace give victory and a crown of righteousness in the life eternal (2 Tim. 4: 7, 8) to all who continue faithful to Him in the spiritual conflict with sin and Satan (Rev. 2: 10; Matt. 24: 13): but His enemies He will put under His feet (Matt. 22: 24).

XVII. Of the Universal Offer of Grace and the Call of God unto Faith.

By universal grace as we confess it (Tit. 2: 11—14) we do not understand that God dispenses gifts and favors alike great to all men and at all times (See Art. IX) even not under the preaching of the Gospel; much less that through the death of Christ all men without distinction are reconciled with God (John 3: 36) and received and adopted as children (John 1: 12), for then would conversion (Mark 1: 15,) regeneration (John 3: 3), and a willingness to become reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5: 20) be no longer necessary, upon which, however, the Gospel lays great stress (Acts 2: 38—40), ascribing the grace of justification only to them who truly believe (Rom. 3: 22, 25, 26; Acts 10: 43; 13: 39).

We understand rather thereby, in the first place, the all-including love of God and of Jesus Christ in the work of salvation (John 3: 16), seeing that the Lord Jesus died not only for many (Matt. 20: 28) but for all men (2 Cor. 5: 15; 1 Tim. 2: 5, 6; Heb. 2: 9), not only for the reconciliation of the believers (John 10: 15; Acts 20:

28) but for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2: 2); that, namely, God so reconciled the world unto Himself (2 Cor: 5: 19) that He in view of the perfect obedience (Rom. 5: 18, 19) and death (Isa. 53: 11, 12) of Christ—as the ransom for all—has made His throne of grace accessible (Heb. 10: 19—22) to all sinners (1 Tim. 1: 15; Luke 19: 10) without distinction (Rom. 10: 12; 2: 11; Isa. 45: 22), and therefore has ordered that universal forgiveness be proclaimed (Acts 17: 30) to all the world (Mark 16: 15, 16), so that every one who believes (John 3: 15) and is converted (Luke 24: 47) shall not perish but shall have forgiveness of sins and inherit eternal life (Acts 13: 38, 39). Wherefore then we have confidence that no one will be eternally damned for Adam's transgression, but indeed for his own obstinacy, his unbelief, his disobedience, etc., and that thus we need not fear condemnation for little children, but rather we may cherish for them the hope of the kingdom of God for Christ's sake (Mark 10: 13—16).

Again we confess to believe that with whatever power (Gal. 2: 8; Eph. 1: 19) and absolute authority (Matt. 20: 15; 1 Cor. 12: 11; Eph. 1: 11) it may please God to work at certain times to bring about conviction and conversion (Isa. 44: 3), and though some nations and persons are preferred before others (Luke 8: 10), all of which we heartily believe and reverently adore,—it is yet withal sufficiently plain and evident that God's work of grace to incite man to faith and conversion (Acts 3: 26) is so far general that He does not altogether pass by any one (Rom. 1: 20; 2: 14, 15) but manifests to all and every one His goodness (Ps. 145: 9) and justice, and even the common mercies of His providence have this in view (Acts 17: 27) and lead to this end (Rom. 2: 4).

Seeing then, as we do, that all grace shown by God

to fallen man from the gates of Paradise on through all times, is the fruit only and solely of Christ's mediation, and that it has pleased God to reveal the same very differently and by degrees, we regard ourselves as both disqualified (1 Cor. 4: 5; Rom. 14: 4) and unable to define with exactness what the Lord our God through His omnipresent Spirit and His unceasing works of providence does and will do (Job 33: 14, 24, 28—30) in the consciences of such nations and persons who hitherto have been deprived of the knowledge of the Gospel. For this reason we hold it best to maintain a holy silence on this point, since we know that God's decisions are always in accordance with the most perfect justice, and are ordered according to the highest wisdom, and that He does not reap where He has not sown. Or if we should have to choose, we would think that He would for Christ's sake extend His mercy to those who according to the measure of their knowledge of God (Rom. 2: 9, 14—16) and His revelation have sought the Lord (Acts 17: 27, 30; Rom. 10: 12, 13) feared Him (Acts 10: 34, 35) and glorified Him (Rom. 21).

Especially do we acknowledge the universality of the divine work of grace in the case of those who live under the preaching of the gospel, viz., that God either by the general influence of His providence on the conscience (Ps. 33: 15), or by His Word (John 15: 22), or by His Spirit (John 14: 26; 16: 8—11; Eph. 1: 17), or by all these means combined (Rev. 3: 20) offers to every man (endowed with reason and understanding) sufficient opportunity (Isa. 5: 3, 4; 65: 2) and grants divine help to make a beginning and then to advance step by step in the knowledge of Him (John 7: 17; Micah 6: 8) and to attain unto faith (Mark 9: 24) and conversion (Isa. 55: 7); after which, if this prevenient grace of God (in the strength which it supplies) is recognized and accepted ac-

cording to ability, (Prov. 1: 30) and God's face is sought according to the measure of knowledge (1 Chron. 28: 9; 2 Chron. 15: 2—4), more grace will inevitably follow (Jas. 4: 6). Yea, we doubt not that the Lord will in His time and way and according to the riches of His grace and His great promises (Luke 11: 9—13) give all else necessary to complete salvation and happiness (Eph. 2: 8, 9).

From all this it naturally follows that those who accept the testimonies of God by a living faith (1 John 4: 16) obtain great pleasure (Matt. 11: 28) to take refuge themselves in the proffered hope (Heb. 6: 18; 10: 19—23; Rom. 3: 24, 25) and also to commend it to all others and invite souls thereto (Rev. 22: 17) as the experience of all those who are in any measure constrained by the love of Christ proves (2 Cor. 5: 13—15).

XVIII. Of Faith by Which We Partake of the Grace of God in Christ.

We hold that it is not enough to have simply a historical knowledge of the truth (Rom. 2: 17—24), or to assent to it, or even to be able to talk eloquently and beautifully about it (1 Cor. 4: 20); more particularly that true faith does not consist in a self-assumed favorable position (John 8: 32, 33; Matt. 3: 9; Rom. 2: 28, 29; 9: 6—8) and assurance (Matt. 7: 21, 22; 15: 13; John 3: 27), for this may all be found apart from the heart-renewing and cleansing power (2 Cor. 5: 17; Gal. 6: 15; Acts 15: 9), apart from true love (2 Thess. 2: 10) and good works (Matt. 7: 17) without which true faith unto righteousness (Rom. 10: 10) can not exist (Jas. 2: 17; Gal. 5: 6).

Saving faith therefore includes both a profound conviction (Heb. 11: 1) and understanding of divine truth, and an appreciation of its sublimity and worth

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(Matt. 13: 44—46). It is thus, viewed in its inception, nothing less than a light from God shining in our souls (2 Cor. 4: 6). Further, faith may be defined as including a hearty consent (Rom. 7: 16), approval (Ps. 119: 128) and appropriation (Ps. 119: 97) of all God's testimonies (Ps. 19:7), promises (Ps. 119: 49, 50) and blessings (Ps. 116: 12), especially the gift of His Son, and all this out of love (1 John 4: 8, 19) combined with a deep reverence and sense of unworthiness (Luke 7: 6); frequently also with much anxiety and fear so that the joy in the Holy Spirit (1Thess. 1: 6), which should otherwise follow without fail, may for a time remain suppressed through the weakness of the faith.

This faith naturally begets a passionate desire to partake by experience of the whole Christ and in consequence of this an humble looking for and to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world (John 1: 29; 3: 14, 15). In other words it amounts to fleeing to Christ for refuge (Heb. 6: 18; Matt. 11: 28, 29), actually accepting Him in all respects (though in varying degrees as to clearness and power according to the measure of faith) with much crying for mercy (Matt. 9: 27), repentance and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5: 31; Matt. 8: 2; Ps. 51: 1—17) and a participation in all the blessings He has obtained for us (John 1: 16; 1 John 5: 12).

To this fleeing for refuge in such a frame of mind there belongs a sincere prayer for acceptance (Luke 15: 19) an actual selfsurrender and unfeigned submission (Isa. 44: 5; Acts 16: 30), henceforth not to live unto one's self but unto Him who died for us and rose again (2 Cor. 5: 15), the soul being constrained thereto by love, with great desire (2 Cor. 5: 9, 14) and joy (Prov. 21: 15).

In all this, faith acts and is sustained (Heb. 11: 33—38) by a deeply felt trust in God (Rom. 4: 3), bold-

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ing Him to be faithful that promised (Rom. 10: 23) and that having not spared His own Son, He will with Him freely give us all things (Rom. 8: 32; Heb. 4: 16), which trust is fully answered by His actual dealings in His own time.

This true faith we recognize as a gift of God (Phil. 1: 29; Eph. 2: 8) wrought in us (Phil. 1: 6; 1 Cor. 12: 7—11; 2 Thess 1: 11) through His word (Rom. 10: 17) and by His Spirit (Acts 16: 14; Luke 24: 45; John 16: 8, 15) out of free grace, yet so that in order to its proper reception it is necessary that we give an attentive ear to what the Lord says (Isa. 55: 3—7) and do not harden our hearts against it (Prov. 1: 23—33; 28: 13, 14; Heb. 3: 7, 8) but give room to the power of conviction and yield to it (Mark 4: 23—25); for in them that draw back the Lord has no pleasure (Heb. 10: 38; 3: 18, 19).

By this faith one becomes a child of God (Gal. 3: 26), overcomes the world (1 John 5: 4), and is fortified against the crafty attacks of the devil (Eph. 6: 16); but without it, it is impossible to please God (Heb. 11: 6). As faith is the ordained means of becoming a partaker of the grace of God in Christ, so it is also the means of abiding in Christ, of holding fast to Him, of becoming more intimately united with Him, and of drawing from Him, as the head of the body or as the true vine, all spiritual life power and thus walk worthy of God who has called us unto His kingdom and glory (1 Thess. 2: 12).

XIX. Of Conversion and the New Birth.

Since the heart of man is evil from his youth (Gen. 8: 21; John 3: 6) and carnally-minded (Rom. 8: 5) which is enmity against God (Rom. 8: 7), it is self-evident that such a faith as set forth in the preceding chapter includes and brings about a sincere amending of one's

ways (Eph. 4: 25—29; 1 Pet. 4: 2—4), conversion (Acts 3: 19) and a newness of life (Rom. 6: 4, 11; 8: 1, 4). Therefore equally as strong emphasis is laid upon conversion as upon faith (Matt. 18: 3; Acts 2: 38) and the Lord Jesus has declared most solemnly, that no one can see the kingdom of God unless he be born again (John 3: 3; Luke 13: 3—5).

This teaches us that all men must be converted if they are to receive remission of sins (Isa. 45: 22; Luke 24: 47), be fitted for fellowship with God who is light (1 John 1: 5—7), and bring forth good fruit (Matt. 12: 33—35; John 15: 8); since neither profession (Matt. 7: 21) nor baptism, nor the Lord's Supper, nor any other outward act apart from regeneration can avail anything to please God (Gal. 5: 6; 6: 15; Eph. 4: 22—24).

That this essential experience of conversion may be truly a turning unto the Lord (Hos. 14: 2; Jer. 4: 1), it is not sufficient that one be convinced in his conscience that he must leave the evil and do good, for this is found among the heathen (Rom. 2: 14, 15) and with many of the worst sinners (Acts 24: 25). Again it is not enough to make some good resolutions now and then (Matt. 21: 28—30), or to do this or that good deed (Mark 6: 20) without a sincere turning of the heart to God (Acts 8: 21), for in this way one may indeed come near to the kingdom of God (Matt. 13: 20—22; Mark 12: 34) and yet be excluded from it just the same (Matt. 25: 11, 12; Luke 13: 24). But in order to a true conversion there must be such an understanding and conviction of sin (Ps. 51; John 16: 8) that we repent of it not only because of the punishment that it brings, but primarily because through it we have dishonored, offended and lost God (Isa. 1: 2—4; Deut. 32: 5—6, Dan. 9: 5—19); for it is sorrow for God that worketh unto salvation a repentance which bringeth no regret (2 Cor. 7: 10). They

who thus sorrow, shall be comforted (Matt. 5: 4). Those who are thus exercised abhor themselves (Job 42: 6; Ezek. 36: 31), hate and leave sin (Ps. 119: 104), and from the heart make the resolve,—I will arise (Luke 15: 18), I will confess (Ps. 32: 5). And this they do in that they penitently plead for forgiveness (Luke 18: 13; Ps. 51), make a complete surrender of their will (Rom. 6: 17), and seek to know (Acts 22: 10) and to do (Ps. 40: 8; Eph. 6: 6) what is well-pleasing unto the Lord (Eph. 5: 10).

In view of the inner renewing of the understanding and the will (Rom. 12: 2; Tit. 3: 5) as well as of the outward active change and renewing of the life (Matt. 18: 3; Rom. 6: 4), this true conversion is also called a new birth, a being born again (John 3: 7), a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 17; Eph. 2: 10—15) and the like, because the change of condition and activity that is brought about is as though a heart of stone had been removed and one of flesh received, upon which the Lord would write His law (Ezek. 36). The effect is therefore nothing less than a transition from sin to virtue (Rom. 6: 17—22), from death unto life (1 John 3: 14), from darkness to light (Eph. 5: 8), from the power of Satan unto God (Acts 26: 18), etc., though weak in its inception and needing growth (Col. 1:11—14) and strengthening (Eph. 6: 10).

This true conversion or new birth is therefore a spiritual life, which, like faith, comes from God (Eph. 4: 18; Rom. 6: 11; Gal. 2: 19, 20; Acts 11: 18; Tit. 3: 5; Ps. 51: 10) a gift of God in Christ for which we must ask and return thanks as for a blessing upon which depends our whole happiness (Tit. 3: 5; 1 Pet. 1: 3, 21—23; 2: 25). Nevertheless, to obtain it, there is required on our part, accompanying the divine work of grace and through the same, earnest effort (Luke 8: 18; 13: 24;

Jas. 1: 21) and great diligence as is plainly evident from the many exhortations and promises (Ezek. 18: 30—32; Mark 1: 15; Isa. 55: 7; Luke 7: 30—34; Matt. 11: 20) as well as warnings and rebukes pointing this way.

XX. Of Justification and Faith.

Through faith, which as shown above stands directly connected with conversion and the new birth, a poor, grief-stricken sinner (Matt. 5: 3; Luke 18: 13) obtains true justification from God (Rom. 3: 24—26; 8: 33), not for any merit of his own, but alone out of grace (Tit. 3: 5) by virtue of the full obedience and sufficient offering of Christ (Rom. 5: 18, 19; Heb. 10: 10—14), being made free and absolved from all his sins (Acts 13: 38, 39), however great they may be (Isa. 1: 18; Ps. 32; Ps. 51; Rom. 5: 6—10) called into fellowship with Christ (1 Cor. 1: 9), and made a rightful partaker of Him (Heb. 3: 14) and of the blessings of salvation which He obtained for His people (1 Cor. 1: 30) and which out of His fullness and in His wisdom he gives each in His time (Eph. 4: 7; John 1: 14—16).

In the counsel of God this boon, great beyond all comprehension (John 3: 16; Rom. 5: 6—10), has been accomplished and bestowed once for all (2 Cor. 5: 17—19) when the Son of God, as the surety of a better covenant (Heb. 7: 22) and the redeemer of his people, offered (1 Tim. 2: 5, 6; Heb. 10: 4—10), accomplished (John 17: 4) and suffered (Phil. 2: 8—10) in their stead, all that the offended majesty of God demanded to be reconciled with the world. Wherefore the Son of God could say on the cross as He gave His soul into death, "It is finished" (John 19: 30); and to this also bear witness the rending of the veil (Heb. 10: 14—20), Christ's glorious resurrection and ascension (Rom. 1: 4; 4: 18—25), the giving of the Holy Spirit, and the preaching of

the Gospel in all the world.

But before the tribunal of conscience this comes to pass only then when true faith is exercised, and not before, since faith is distinctly the God-ordained means (John 3: 16; 6: 40) of becoming actually and personally a partaker of Christ and the blessings He obtained for us. For this reason evangelical justification is always associated with faith (Rom. 3: 22, 28, 30; John 3: 16—18, 36) and remains thus inseparably associated.

Thus it is (as set forth in Art. 18) that a really convicted sinner, poor (Isa. 66: 2) and heavy laden (Matt. 11: 28), flies for refuge to this gracious Christ. Utterly undone in himself, he hungers after Christ with weeping and sighing (Jer. 3: 21, 22), falls at His feet praying for forgiveness of sins and adoption into the sonship of God (2 Cor. 6: 16—18; Gal. 4: 4—6); he tastes and realizes that the Lord is gracious (1 Pet. 2: 3) in that He covers our nakedness and condescends to dwell in us (John 14: 23; Eph. 3: 17) and we are found in Him (Rom. 8: 1; Phil. 3: 9). We come praying that we may be healed of our infirmities (Matt. 9: 12), of our spiritual blindness (Isa. 35: 5; Eph. 1: 18; Rev. 3: 18), deafness, barrenness (Ps. 63: 1; 119: 81—83), leprosy (Ps. 38: 3—8; Isa. 1: 6), and every form of spiritual disease (Ps. 103: 3); that He baptize us with His Holy Spirit (Matt. 3: 11); that He satisfy our hunger and thirst with heavenly food and drink (John 6: 48—51; 7: 37, 38), and make us partakers of His divine nature (2 Pet. 1: 2—4) so that His mind may be in us (Phil. 2: 5; Matt. 5: 44—48), that by His grace our old man may be crucified with Him. (Rom. 6: 4—6; Gal. 5: 24) and His life may be manifested in us (2 Cor. 4: 10, 11) being conformed unto His death and risen again to a newness of life thus to know by personal experience the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3: 10; Eph. 1: 19, 20) to the praise and glory

of His Heavenly Father (Rom. 6: 17).

This is what we call knowing Christ after the Spirit whereby eternal life is received (John 10: 4, 14; 17: 3), and we frankly submit that without this spiritual knowledge, this inward exercise and experience, a knowledge of Christ historically or according to the letter does not suffice unto salvation (Rom. 2: 14—20. 28, 29; 1 Cor. 13: 1—3). However, the soul that in truth seeks refuge in Christ (Ps. 145: 18) with stedfastness in prayer (Luke 18: 7; Rom. 12: 12) we believe will assuredly find grace (Matt. 7: 7—11) in God's own time, and be received into the covenant of God (2 Cor. 6: 18) whereby every one thus constituted, becomes the property of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 2: 19).

The most certain outward proof of this great work of salvation, we hold is to be found in the fruits of righteousness, such as unfeigned love to God (1 Cor. 8: 3; Luke 7: 47) and to the brethren (1 John 3: 14) yea to all men, active godliness (1 John 3: 18, 19) and an earnest observance of God's commandments (1 John 5: 1—4). The inward verification is found in the experience of peace with God (Rom. 5: 1; Isa. 32: 17), a new spiritual joy (Isa. 29: 19; 61: 10), as also a strong assurance (Rom. 8: 38, 39) and sealing of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1: 21, 22; 5: 5; Rom 8: 16; Eph. 1: 13; 4: 7, 30; 1 John 4: 13); and all this according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

XXI. Of Good Works, or the Piety of True Believers.

By good works, for which the believers in Christ Jesus are created that they should walk in them (Eph. 2: 10), those works must not be meant which are only outward (Luke 11: 39) and have simply the appearance of good like the works of the Pharisees (Matt. 23: 28); nor those that are performed from natural or civil mo-

tives (Matt. 5: 44—47; Luke 6: 32) which, though good and becoming in themselves, are not distinctly characteristic of true christianity; and not those which spring out of a servile or legal spirit (John 15: 15; Gal. 4: 7; Rom. 9:31, 32; 10:1—4) more out of fear and compulsion (Rom. 8: 15; 1 John 4: 18) than out of love (Gal. 5: 6; 1 Tim. 1: 5); for the disciple of Christ is called unto a better righteousness than is found in all these (Matt. 5: 20).

Therefore we hold those only to be *good* works which are well-pleasing to God in Christ (1 Pet. 2: 5; Rom. 12: 1, 2; Heb. 12: 28), being wrought in God (John 3: 21), proceeding out of faith (Heb. 11: 6) and love (1 John 4: 8) and true thankfulness (1 John 4: 19) out of a changed and renewed mind (Eph. 5: 8—10; Rom. 12: 2) a childlike fear (Prov. 14: 27), in short out of a fellowship with Christ (John 15: 5) in and through the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5: 22—24; Eph. 5: 9—11).

In our relation to God this life requires an humble walking with Him (Micah 6: 8) and before His face (Gen. 17: 1) in heart-felt love (Matt. 22: 37—40; Eph. 5: 1, 2), gratitude (Col. 1: 12), praise (1 Cor. 6: 20), childlike fear (1 Pet. 1: 17), obedience (Eph. 6: 6), etc.

In relation to our fellowmen, good works consist in a practical and unwearying exercise of righteousness (Tit. 2: 12; 1 John 3: 18), forbearance (Phil. 4: 5; Tit. 3: 2; Jas. 3: 17), gentleness (1 Pet. 3: 8; 2 Tim. 2: 24; Phil. 2: 3, 4), readiness to serve (Gal. 5: 3), benevolence (1 Tim. 6: 17, 18; Heb. 3: 16), etc. in the endeavor to promote the best interests of our neighbors both in soul and body (Lev. 19: 17) and this not only of the brethren (Rom. 12: 10; Heb. 13: 1; 1 John 3: 16) but of all (2 Pet. 1: 7; 1 Thess. 3: 12) yea even of our enemies (Rom. 12: 20).

In reference to one's self there is required a holy

watchfulness and warfare (Luke 12: 1—5; 17: 3; 21: 34; Eph. 6: 10—18; Heb. 12: 1—4, 12—17; 2 Pet. 3: 17) against all manner of intemperance (Tit. 2: 4—6; 1 Tim. 2: 9, 10) and worldly lusts (2 Pet. 1: 4; 1 John 2: 16), against all unclean affections and lusts of the flesh (Rom. 13: 14; 1 Pet. 2: 12), against pride (Rom. 11: 20; Ps. 19: 13) and all its miserable issues (Jas. 4: 1—6; Matt. 15: 19) such as hatred, envy, and anger; or thoughtless, frivolous, and harsh words (Gal. 5: 19—21; Matt. 12: 36; 5: 37; Jas. 5: 11, 12), corrupt speech (Eph. 4: 29) and the like. Thus the deeds of the body of sin (Rom. 8: 13; 7: 23, 24) with all its members upon the earth, must be mortified (Col. 3: 5) and the opposite virtues be put on (Col. 3: 12—14) in order that we may live unto righteousness (1 Pet. 2: 24), increase in holiness (Heb. 12: 14; Rev. 22: 11) unto perfection in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7: 1; 1 Thess. 3: 13).

XXII. Of Perseverence in Holiness.

The true believer applies himself with all diligence in this new spiritual life to walk worthily of the Lord (Col. 1: 10, 11; 1 Thess. 2: 12) and to be fruitful in good works, not only because he is called and in duty bound thereto (Eph. 4: 1—3; 2 Pet. 1: 5—10), but because by virtue of his new birth from God (1 John 3: 9) there is within him an inward impulse (Ps. 119: 35) an inbred disposition to the same (2 Cor. 5: 9). He finds in it a holy delight (Rom. 7: 22), a great spiritual, yea divine, peace and comfort (Acts 9: 31), a growth in the knowledge of God (Col. 1: 10, 11) and of Jesus Christ (Eph. 4: 15), in short, the life of the soul. By a contrary course a believer does violence to his own soul (Prov. 8: 36), pursues death (Rom. 6: 16; 8: 6) and brings upon himself great misery (1 Tim. 6: 10).

It is therefore contrary to the renewed nature of

the believers and in antagonism with it, to sin (1 John 3: 6—9). Moreover, they are carefully watched over and kept (Ps. 23; Zech. 2: 8; Jude 1) by the faithful Shepherd (John 10: 1—16; Ezek. 34: 11—31) and Bishop of their souls (1 Pet. 2: 25), as also by His heavenly Father who is greater than all (John 10: 29), so that it is impossible for any power, however great, to pluck them out of such faithful hands in which they are kept unto salvation (1 Pet. 1: 5; John 10: 28, 29).

Wherefore also it seems unnecessary that any one should teach them (1 John 2: 27) if they will but abide in Him constantly as they ought (1 John 3: 6) and will let that abide in them which they have heard from the beginning (1 John 2: 24).

But since they have this treasure in earthen vessels (2 Cor. 4: 7) and in their flesh there dwelleth no good thing (Rom. 7: 18) but on the contrary a law that wars against the law of their mind (Rom. 7: 23), since they are, moreover, surrounded by various seductions of the world (1 John 2: 16) and temptations of the devil (Eph. 6: 11; 1 Pet. 5: 8), and since the Lord permits all this that He may prove their faith and their obedience (Deut. 8: 2, 16—18) and keep them in humility through the experience of their weakness (2 Cor. 12: 7); there is required of them, notwithstanding what has been said above, or rather by reason of it (1 Pet. 1: 5—7; Phil. 2: 13), nothing less than resolute watchfulness and earnest care (1 Cor. 6: 13) that they may not fall back (1 Tim. 1: 6; 6: 20, 21; Heb. 3: 12), become slothful (Heb. 6: 12; 3: 13; Rom. 12: 11), lose again that which they have already obtained (2 John 8), fall from their stronghold (2 Pet. 3: 17), and be overcome of sin (2 Pet. 2: 20), as is shown to have been the case with many who at first ran well (Gal. 5: 7) but afterward grew weary (Heb. 12: 3—5) and were but scarcely brought back to the right path

(1 Pet. 4: 18; Ps. 40: 1, 2) not without agony of soul (2 Sam. 24: 14) and grievous chastisement (Ps. 38: 1—19; 51; 130)—let alone that such escape is not recorded of all.

For this reason the Scriptures are everywhere full of admonition to take heed (Heb. 3: 12—15), to watch (Luke 21: 36; Rev. 16: 15; Matt. 26: 41), to pray always (Eph. 6: 18; Luke 18: 1; Rom. 12: 12) that we may be zealous (Tit. 2: 14), rich (1 Tim. 6: 18), full (Acts 9: 36), yea abounding (1 Cor. 15: 58; 2 Cor. 9: 8; 2 Pet. 1: 8) in good works (Tit. 3: 8); also that we consider one another (Heb. 10: 24, 25), exhort one another (1 Thess. 5: 11) and pray with and for one another (Jas. 5: 14—18); and it is indicated that even the most sincere hearts may not consider this to be useless or unnecessary (2 Pet. 1: 12, 13; 3: 1; Phil. 3: 1; Heb. 3: 12—14).

XXIII. Of the Church of Christ.

All such believing, converted, and from the heart obedient ones (Rom. 6: 17) together constitute as so many living stones (1 Pet. 2: 5) a holy temple in the Lord (1 Cor. 3: 16, 17; Eph. 2: 20, 21), the true church (Heb. 12: 23), the people of God (Heb. 4: 9), the church of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16: 18) which He has purchased through His own blood (Acts 20: 28).

This church, according to our confession, is but one (John 10: 16), its members (1 Cor. 12), however many (Rev. 7: 9), and however varied in their achievements (Rom. 12: 4—6), constituting but one body (Eph. 4: 4—6) of which Jesus Christ is the head (Col. 1: 18; 2: 19). It is known by such names as, People of God (Heb. 4: 9), His Saints (Ps. 50: 4; Rom. 8: 27), the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 13: 18, 23; 25: 1), the Kingdom of God (Matt. 12: 28), the Kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1: 13; Eph. 5: 5), etc.

We call this church holy, not saying by this that its members are freed from the condition of sinfulness as long as they live here below (1 John 1: 8), but because they are sanctified by God the Father (Jude 1) in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1: 2) as well as by His sanctifying Himself for them (John 17: 19; Eph. 5: 26; Heb. 2: 11) as also by their actual separation from the world (2 Pet. 1: 4; 2 Cor. 6: 17) and their transition into the Kingdom of the Son of God (Col. 1: 13) to serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life (Luke 1: 74, 75).

That this church is general we confess, because in it the distinction between different nationalities falls away (Rom. 10: 12; Eph. 2: 14) and its members are scattered in all parts of the earth (Matt. 24: 31) among all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues (Rev. 5: 9; 7: 9); wherefore it is self-evident that this true church must not be sought among any particular nation or a particular class of professors (Acts 10: 35; 1 Cor. 3: 1—5) or limited to such to the exclusion of others (Luke 17: 21—23; Matt. 24: 26; Mark 13: 21.)

We call the church Christian, because we thereby mean only those that believe in Jesus Christ (John 1: 12) are united with Him (John 15), belong to Him as His sheep, know Him, hear and follow Him (John 10: 12, 27) and are therefore most tenderly loved (John 13: 1), cherished (Eph. 5: 29, 30), led, protected and kept (John 10) by Him, the weak as well as the strong (Isa. 40: 11, 25—31.)

Because of the intimate relation which the members of Christ's spiritual body sustain to each other, it is His expressed will (Mark 10: 42—45; Matt. 23: 11; Mark 9: 35) that these His saints shall cultivate fellowship (John 13: 34, 35; 17: 22, 26) and this not in a restricted way (Matt. 5: 46—48), as for instance only with

those, with whom we are especially united, or with those whose association may seem desirable for our own benefit—for this would follow of itself—but with all believers in general (Acts 4: 32; 1 Thess 3: 12; 5: 15; 2 Thess. 1: 3), even with those who seem to be the weakest (Acts 20: 35; Rom. 14: 1; 1 Thess. 5: 14) and most insignificant (1 Cor. 12: 22—24), for such have special need of spiritual help (Gal. 6: 1). Has not God put together and endowed the members of the body in such a manner that they must have care one for another (1 Cor. 12: 18—31; Rom. 12: 3—10), so that those that are strong bear the infirmities of the weak and do not have pleasure in themselves (Rom. 15: 1—3)? For this reason it is not proper, on the one hand, that any among them think of others,—I have no need of thee (1 Cor. 12: 21, 22), nor on the other hand, that any one should possess his gifts for himself alone (Rom. 12: 4—8); but it is the duty of each one to use the same as much as possible for the general good (Mark 4: 21; 1 Pet. 4: 10, 11).

From this arises the necessity for the assembling of believers in meetings (1 Cor. 11: 18; Acts 2: 1), of which both the Lord Jesus and His Apostles spoke with approval (Matt. 18: 19, 20; Heb. 10: 23—25). Therefore, too, our Lord Himself was a regular attendant at such meetings (Luke 4: 16) and likewise His loving disciples came together even at the risk of their lives (John 20: 19; Acts. 12: 12—16) thus to serve God publicly (Acts 13: 1—3; Eph. 4: 11, 12) and to praise Him together as with one accord (Rom. 15: 6; Acts 11: 18); to confess Jesus Christ before the whole world (Matt. 10: 32; Rom. 10: 10; 1 Tim. 6: 12), cultivate fellowship among themselves (Acts 2: 42) in edification (1 Tim. 4: 13; 1 Cor. 14: 26) and continue in the breaking of bread (Acts 20: 7) and in prayer (Matt. 18: 19, 20). Therefore we pray all disciples of Christ Jesus not to withdraw themselves

from such meetings out of obstinacy or self-conceit (Heb. 10: 23—25) seeing that even the weakest and least talented can be useful in the Lord's temple if only their lives show a good example (1 Pet. 3: 1–5), if they are active in works of love (Rom. 16: 1—6; Heb. 6: 10) and by earnest intercession strengthen the hands of the servants of the Lord.

And though hypocrites (2 Tim. 3: 5; Jude 12) and the unconverted (Rom. 12: 2) should mingle in great numbers with the flock of Jesus who are His own (John 10: 14, 27), as has at all times been the case, sometimes less and sometimes more, in the outward fold of the church—a condition unavoidable on account of the limitations in our ability to discern the intents of the heart —the true disciples of Jesus (John 8: 31) must not be soon alarmed or draw back discouraged, but must seek to let their lights shine (Matt: 5: 13—16) and become pillars in the house of their God (Rev. 3: 12), remembering that the Son of God represented the economy and outward union of the church as composed partly of foolish virgins (Matt. 25: 2; Luke 17: 34—36). Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness (2 Tim. 2: 19).

XXIV. Of the Ministry of the Church.

In reference to the ministers of the church we reverently consider that God is not a God of disorder (1 Cor. 14: 33) and that the Lord Jesus Christ in order to promote the above mentioned unity and edification of His people (Eph. 4: 12—15) instituted various offices and conditions in His church (1 Pet. 4: 10), in that He gave some to be apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers for the per-

fecting of the saints unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of His body (Eph. 4: 11—16), etc.

Now, although our Lord did this directly (Mark 3: 14; Luke 9: 1, 2) and by original authority (John 15: 16) as long as He was here on earth and as far as the first founders of His church were concerned (1 Cor. 3: 10—15; Eph. 2: 20, 21), whom He therefore also endowed with much grace (2 Cor. 4: 5, 6) and extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2, 1—4), we yet know full well that He must have willed and commanded (as Acts 1: 2, 3 cf. Rom. 15: 18 suggests) that later on this be done indirectly, in respect to the regular and ordinary ministers of His church who should simply continue to build on the foundation already laid (1 Cor. 3: 11) and for this reason ever remained subordinate to the first, "the apostles" (1 Cor. 14: 37). Moreover we hold ourselves assured of this partly because good order requires it (Matt. 12: 25) and the promise of Christ's presence is given to the ministers of the Gospel even unto the end of the world (Matt. 28: 20) and partly because it accords with the constant practice and directions of the apostles (Acts 14: 23; Tit. 1: 5).

Therefore we believe it is the duty of all assemblies of saints that they observe this order after the example and direction of the apostles (2 Tim. 2: 2; 1 Cor. 11: 2; 2 Thess. 2: 15), namely, that they pray, as Christ commanded, that the Lord of the harvest send forth laborers into His harvest (Matt. 9: 38); that they, however, also look about for such men as are of good report, possessing the gift of the Spirit and true faith (Acts 6: 2—5) and other essential characteristics (2 Tim. 2: 24—26; Tit. 1: 6—9) in the highest measure obtainable; further, that to such men, chosen with prayer (Acts 1: 24) and with the greatest possible unanimity (thus not doing violence to the rights common to the whole brotherhood,

much less disregarding the same) (Acts 6: 5; Jas. 2: 1—9; 1 Pet. 5: 1—4), the administering of the affairs of the church shall be committed (Acts 6: 3) and they solemnly installed in their office (1 Tim. 4: 14) provided they accept the call and have first been examined and proved (1 Tim. 3: 10; 1 Cor. 9).

Those who have been thus lawfully chosen to the office of overseer (1 Tim. 3: 1) and have accepted the same in faith as of the Lord (Col. 4: 17) have in consequence resting on them very weighty obligations toward the church, as the latter also has toward them. It is incumbent upon the shepherds and teachers to pasture the church of God, speaking always as is proper according to sound doctrine (1 Tim. 6: 3—5; 2 Tim. 1: 13; Tit. 1: 9; 2: 1; 1 Pet. 5: 1, 2), to proclaim unto her the whole counsel of God (Acts 20: 26—28) and, as much as in them is, as faithful and wise stewards (1 Cor. 4: 1, 2; 2 Tim. 2: 2; Luke 12: 42) to impart unto each one in particular according to his circumstances and condition (1 Cor. 9: 22; 1 Tim. 5: 1; 1 Pet. 4: 10), to watch over the church (Heb. 13: 17) and to set before her a good example in a godly life (1 Pet. 5: 3; 1 Tim. 4: 12).

The deacons have likewise and in many points similar holy responsibilities (1 Tim. 3: 8—13). They must help to rule the church in the fear of God (1 Tim. 5: 17), collect the usual offerings, exercise faithful stewardship with these, and whatever other gifts there may be, and according to need distribute in the best way, impartially, with kindness and love (2 Cor. 8: 19—21; 9: 5—14).

The church on her part owes it to hold them in honor (Phil. 2: 29), to obey them (Heb. 13: 17), to esteem them for their work's sake (1 Thess. 5: 12, 13), not lightly blame them (1 Tim. 5: 19), much less to grieve them and quench the Spirit (1 Thess, 5: 19) but to pray for them (Col. 4: 3, 4; Phil. 1: 19; 4: 10—19; 2 Thess. 3: 1,2;

Heb. 13: 18) and kindly care for them with a proper competence (Gal. 6: 6; Matt. 10: 10; 1 Cor. 9: 7—14; 2 Cor. 11: 7—9; 1 Tim. 5: 18); yet in all this is the respect for their office and administration not to be in any wise binding upon the conscience, except in so far as their words and management are in accord with the word of God (Matt. 15: 9; Phil. 3: 17; 1 John 4: 1; Matt. 7: 16) as the only rule of faith and life (1 Tim. 6: 3—5).

XXV. Of Water Baptism.

In the church of Jesus Christ and through its ministers, we believe there is to be maintained not only the ministry of the word but also, as has already been said, the ordinances commanded by the Lord, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper. (Matt. 28: 19, 20—"Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you" Rev. Ver.). The first of these is to be a sign and a means of incorporation (Gal. 3: 27; 1 Cor. 12: 13), the second a means of strengthening in the covenant with God (Luke 22: 19, 20) and in communion with Christ (1 Cor. 10: 16).

Concerning the act of holy baptism we understand it to be an immersing of the whole body in water (Rom. 6: 4; Matt. 3: 16; Acts 8: 37, 38), or a liberal sprinkling with water (which latter mode we in these northern latitudes consider more generally appropriate, since the same blessings are signified by it) and this most solemnly into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28: 19), God on His account thus giving most positive assurance of the benefits of His covenant of grace, that every one truly believing in Jesus Christ (Rom. 10: 10) and penitently seeking refuge in Him to lay hold of the hope set before us (Rom. 3: 25;

Heb. 6: 18) shall certainly and truly partake of the blessings signified thereby, namely, the washing away of sins through the blood of Christ (Acts 22: 16; Rev. 1: 5) together with all the blessed results that follow (Rom. 8: 17, 28—39).

On the part of the believer to be baptized this ordinance is also exceedingly important and precious in that he, by the act of presenting himself for baptism, most solemnly professes his faith in Jesus Christ and His blood (Rom. 3: 25), that in Him are to be found righteousness and strength (Isa. 45: 24), and that he imploringly prays to be permitted to partake thereof; that as much as in him is, he lays hold on the Savior (John 1: 12) and most humbly offers and surrenders himself to Him (Luke 9: 23; 14: 26, 27; Matt. 10: 37) out of gratitude and reciprocating love (1 John 4: 19; 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15; Eph. 5, 2) to live for His honor and glory (Isa. 44: 5; Rom. 6: 16, 17; 12: 1).

If Christian water baptism is thus devoutly desired (Acts 8: 36), administered (2 Cor. 3: 6), and received (Acts 2: 41; 1 Thess. 2: 13), we hold it in high esteem as a means of communicating and receiving spiritual blessings (1 Pet. 3: 20, 21), nothing less than a washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit (Tit. 3: 5; Eph. 5: 26). This blessed result and work is, however, not obtained through the outward element of the water (1 Pet. 3: 21, "even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh but a prayer addressed to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,"—Parallel Bible), but through the Holy Spirit (Matt. 3: 11; Tit. 3: 5), only on the ground of true faith and the searching of a good conscience before God, wherefore in the absence of this condition in the one baptized the blessing is not found (Acts 8: 21).

Therefore it is, in our estimation, self-evident that

children in their infancy are not qualified to receive the Christian rite of water baptism because they can neither understand nor believe these things (Rom. 10: 14). Further, it does not seem to us right to administer this sacredly important covenant act after the manner of the fleshly law of circumcision and the condition of the church in its infancy (Gal. 4: 1—3; 5: 1—6; Heb. 7: 18, 19; 8: 7—12; 10: 19—22; John 4: 23, 24) on the ground of a superficial assertion (Rom. 2: 29; Phil. 3: 3; Col. 2: 11—15) that baptism have taken the place of circumcision, seeing that in the church of the New Testament everything is founded on grace and truth (John 1: 17), or on the reality of the things typified (Heb. 10: 1). Neither can we assent to infant baptism on the strength of the indefinite and uncertain accounts of the baptizing of Jewish proselytes which are founded on the Jewish Talmud, a book known to be spun through with many fabulous tales. Finally, and of more especial weight is the fact that in all the books of the New Testament we do not find a single convincing indication that in the early church any but grown people were baptized. Of the households that were baptized there are everywhere things said that are not applicable to little children (Acts 10: 2, 47, 48; 16: 15, 34) and in the most detailed reports we find indeed that more and more were added to the church of such as believed in the Lord, both of men and women (Acts 5: 14), but of the baptizing of children there is nowhere any mention (Acts 8: 12).

Since then there is not a single plain evidence concerning infant baptism; since salvation does not depend on any outward sign; since every testimony and narration in the holy Scriptures points only to the baptism of grown persons, even as the nature of the case demands; since the Son of God Himself has led the way otherwise, and it is well known that in the first centuries the most

eminent teachers of the church, though born of believing parents, were baptized only when they had come to years, and that it was not without serious complaint and strong opposition that in the second and third centuries infant baptism increased and prevailed: we therefore come to the conclusion that we must wait with baptism until our children attain to years of riper understanding, that we must carefully instruct them from youth up (2 Tim. 3: 15), pray with them and for them, lay before them the importance of the matter, and the necessity of faith and conversion, and that in this we must keep on and on. As many of them as in the course of time with constancy confess their faith, their repentance and a decision for the good, and also in their lives do not manifest the contrary, shall be baptized, we believe, and added to the church, calling on the name of the Lord (Acts 22: 16) according to the example of the apostolic church.

XXVI. Of the Holy Supper.

By the Supper of the Lord we understand the sacred and solemn act of the Lord with His disciples in the night in which He was betrayed (1 Cor. 11: 23—26) when after the eating of the Passover meal (Luke 22: 15) He took of the bread which they had, blessed (Luke 22: 19, 20) and broke it and gave to the disciples (Matt. 26: 26—28) with the gracious words,—"Take, eat; this is my body which is broken and given for you: this do in remembrance of me."

Likewise also He took the cup after the eating of the Supper, gave thanks again (Mark 14: 22, 23) and gave it to the disciples with the loving words,—"Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

That the Lord instituted this sacrament with the

intention that it is to be observed by His disciples in His church in all time, is plainly seen, we think, not only from the words already quoted, and repeated by the Lord,—"This do in remembrance of me", but also from the renewed command given evidently for this reason, directly to the apostle Paul and through him to the church, in the same words; further, from the careful observance of this sacred act by the first and best Christians (Acts 2: 46; 20: 7); finally also from the fact that the Apostles did not revoke the institution when great disorder and abuse crept in with its observance, but rather insisted on reformation and a return to its right use.

When we consider, moreover, the ends for which this sacrament was instituted, ends worthy of God and positively useful to the church, we find our esteem for the same to grow at every turn. On the part of God and Christ it serves as a means to confirm and seal unto us in the most emphatic manner the great blessings comprehended in the Gospel. The great love of the Father manifested to us (John 3: 14—17); Jesus Christ as crucified, the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5: 9), the true bread of life (John 6: 35, 50, 51, 53—58) both all-sufficient (Heb. 10: 14) as well as ready and willing to give us the life—all this is here, as it were, set before our eyes for the strengthening of our faith and hope (Gal. 3: 1; John 12: 32); and this the Holy Spirit confirms unto the souls that are susceptible to it.

On the side of the believer the celebration of this holy feast has likewise important ends to serve and is useful in more ways than one. In general to bring to grateful remembrance, with deep reverence, the great work of redemption; to proclaim the Lord's death as well as the occasion (1 John 4: 9, 10; Rom. 5: 6—8; 2 Cor. 8: 9) and the effects (Isa. 53: 5, 6; Rom. 8: 1) of the same;

to lay stress upon the exalted duties of the believers toward God (1 Cor. 6: 20; 1 Pet. 1: 14—19) and Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5: 14, 15), as well as toward one another (1 John 4: 11; Col. 3: 13); and more of like nature. But especially according to each one's attitude and inclination, may persons who stand in the assurance of a blessed participation in Christ have fellowship and eat with joy, in love and singleness of heart; burdened ones may fall together at Jesus' feet with new confession of guilt, with humiliation and self-surrender seeking in Him righteousness and strength and looking for His grace; yea, even the most unworthy and the most timid among the people of the Lord, if they hunger indeed after the truth and His righteousness (Matt. 5: 6) and desire to be wholly His, may confidently disclose this longing and this desire, and rest in the hope of His grace, remembering that He never cast out those that came to Him in humility (John 6: 37) crying to Him for mercy, asking for the crumbs, and counting themselves happy if they could but touch the hem of His garment.

If the Lord's holy Supper is thus desired, and celebrated with this end in view, we believe that the true blessing as indicated—the communion with Jesus Christ and the knitting together of the believers (Matt. 26: 26—28; John 6: 55; 1 Cor. 10: 16, 17), will be realized in no small measure, and be furthered thereby. But where this essential frame of mind is lacking (Matt. 22: 11—13) there this fruit can not with reason be expected (2 Chron. 16: 9); and if the elements are taken unworthily, that is, if one does not with reverence discern the body and blood of the Lord, such a one eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself (1 Cor. 11: 27—29).

For this reason we may invite none to the Lord's table but such as truly believe in Jesus Christ and honestly desire to live through and for Him, those who have

openly professed this before God and man, who have been baptized according to the Scriptures (1 Cor. 12: 13) and have been duly received into the church, who do not by their lives give just cause for offence in the church (Rom. 16: 17), who live with her in peace (Matt. 5: 23, 24), and as much as in them is have peace with all men (Rom. 12: 18), who bear with and forgive one another (Matt. 6: 14, 15; 18: 23—35); in short none but disciples of Christ who have a desire and are determined solemnly to renew and confirm the covenant once entered into. Wherefore we admonish everyone to prove himself (1 Cor. 11: 28). Moreover we exclude no one except those who by offensive teaching or disgraceful life (2 Thess. 3: 14; 1 Cor. 5: 9—13) are subject to discipline.

XXVII. Of Brotherly Care and Church Discipline.

We believe that in a Christian Church every brother and every sister must share, according to ability and gifts bestowed, in a mutual care among the members, inciting one another to love and good works (Heb. 10: 24). True love to one's neighbor requires this (Lev. 19: 17, 18), and it is commanded by Christ our Lord (Matt. 18: 15—20), and also enjoined by His apostles after Him (1 Thess. 5: 14, 15; Jas. 5: 16—20). More especially should this be observed by those who are set as overseers (Acts 20: 28; Tit. 1: 7—11), whose work it is by virtue of their office to shepherd the flock (1 Pet. 5: 1—4) and watch over the spiritual welfare of the Church (Heb. 13: 17; Ezek. 3: 17; 33: 2—9).

The cases that call for the notice, reproof, and discipline of the Church are not those shortcomings and mistakes which to a greater or less degree are common to all believers (Jas. 3: 2; 1 John 1: 8; Ps. 130: 2; 143: 2), but errors in teaching (Gal. 1: 8; 1 Tim. 6: 3—5; Tit. 3: 10) or conduct (2 Thess. 3: 6; Phil. 3: 18—19) so far-

reaching that those who commit the error are in apparent danger of losing their souls' inheritance (1 Cor. 6: 5—10) or become a cause of offense and stumbling to the church (Gal. 5: 10; Rev. 2: 20; 1 Cor. 5: 6, 7; Matt. 18: 7), leading souls astray (Matt. 24: 10—12; 2 Tim. 3: 13; Jude 3—4) and causing the name of God and the Church of Christ to be evil spoken of (2 Pet. 2: 2; Rom. 2: 24; 1 Tim. 6: 1; Tit. 2: 3—5).

In dealing with offenders we distinguish the following four stages to be observed: First, when with a reasonable degree of certainty it becomes known that a brother or sister is guilty of this or that dangerous practice or clearly interdicted sin (1 Cor. 5: 11—13; 2 Pet. 2: 20; Gal. 5: 19—21), but the matter is not as yet generally known, the person is to be called to account in private, examined with all possible discretion, and warned in tender love (Gal. 6: 1—3; Jas. 3: 13—18), so that if possible such a one may be brought back into the right way (Jas. 5: 19, 20) before the evil seed spread further (Gal. 5: 9; Heb. 12: 15).

If, in the second place, some one is guilty of manifest works of the flesh (Gal. 5: 19—21; Eph. 5: 3—7) and such fact is surely known, though the sin be committed under circumstances which seem in a degree to palliate the offense, as for instance being taken unawares or having acted hastily, such a one is to be solemnly called to account, the evil of his sin and its consequence set before him with the admonition to humble himself before God (Acts 8: 22; Jas. 4: 7—10; Ps. 51) and man (Matt. 5: 23—26; Luke 17: 1—4), according as the transgression may have been, and all possible means applied to bring about true repentance (Rev. 3: 2—3; Isa. 55: 6, 7); and if necessary he should be counselled not to come to the Lord's table for a time (Jude 22, 23), until by clear proof of an amended life the offence that was given may be re-

moved, or in the judgment of his fellow members (2 Cor. 2: 6—8) it be blotted out.

The third stage is reached in the case of one who, regardless of the first and second reproof given in private, continues and grows hardened in his sin (Eph. 4: 17—19; Acts 19: 9; Heb. 3: 13). He is to be made known to the congregation in order that the whole congregation may decide what is to be done with such a member and take such action that, being reproved in the presence and by the judgment of all, he may be ashamed and be brought to repentance (2 Thess. 3: 14, 15). This properly must be accompanied with earnest prayer that, if possible, the result may be reformation and forgiveness (Jas. 5: 15; 1 John 5: 16, 17).

If, however, all this is fruitless and the reproved one continues and hardens himself in his evil way, he must finally, by the decision of the whole congregation, be excluded from membership and denied all spiritual church-fellowship (Eph. 5: 11) till he is truly converted and gives evident proof thereof. However, all must be done with due regard to position and circumstances (1 Tim. 5: 1, 19—21), yet without respect of person.

This ecclesiastical care and discipline we consider most necessary, not only because Jesus Christ and His apostles enjoined it and by neglecting the same we have to fear just condemnation (1 Cor. 11: 30, 31), but also because it works many a benefit, namely, keeping the church free from open blemish, saving it from harmful contempt, and preventing the estrangement of weak souls or the leading astray of established hearts; yea, much more tending to deter these from evil and on the other hand to move the reproved ones to shame and repentance.

In order, however, that this manner of treatment may have its desired effect, there must be far removed

from us all inordinate desire for authority and all self-conceit of superior holiness, since in the use of these keys (Matt. 16:19) there is a power to which we resort only out of obedience (consider with what holy reserve the apostles went to work: Acts 5: 1—13; 13: 8—11; 1 Cor. 5: 3—5; 1 Tim. 1: 20), and which must be applied in deep humility (2 Cor. 2: 1—4), because we dare not neglect it (1 Cor. 9: 16—22; Ezek. 3: 17—21), and in the fear of the Lord (Matt. 10: 14). There is in it therefore also no condemning or absolving power further than as it is in perfect accord with God's judgment and His holy testimony (Prov. 17: 15; 2 Tim. 2: 2, 15, 24—26; Tit. 1: 9; 2: 2, 7, 8).

For this reason the separation from the persons under discipline must not proceed out of a spirit of Pharisaic holiness (1 Cor. 4: 7), as though we said,—"Depart from me, for I am holier than thou," but out of a holy fear lest we manifest a fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Eph. 5: 11; 1 Cor. 6: 17; 1 Tim, 5: 22; Rev. 18: 4), in accordance with the apostolic injunction to have nothing in common with such; with which there must nevertheless be combined a Christ-like compassion (Rom. 9: 1—3)and continued admonition until one is compelled reluctantly to leave such a person to himself. Between husband and wife this separation cannot in all cases take place unless it be for adultery or fornication (Matt. 5: 32; 19: 9; 1 Cor. 7: 3—5, 10, 16, 39).

In conclusion, we believe in reference to this subject, that as soon as the erring one gives conclusive evidence of sincere sorrow and amendment (Luke 17: 3, 4; 2 Cor. 7: 7, 16) he must be met with added love, encouraged, and, after public and humble confession, received back into communion (Ps. 130: 4; Jer. 3: 1; Ezek. 33: 11), with cordial love and joy (Luke 15: 1—10) and full forgiveness (2 Cor. 2: 10), even as God also in

Christ Jesus has forgiven us (Eph. 4: 32; Col. 3: 13; Matt. 18).

XXVIII. Of the Office of Temporal Government.

We believe that although men have by nature no right to rule over one another with violence, but only in a brotherly spirit to control themselves and come to one another's assistance (Acts 17: 26, 27; Matt. 7: 12), nevertheless, the office of Government has become necessary by reason of man's great corruptness (Gen. 6: 12, 13) and that the Lord our God therefore has not only permitted but determined and ordained it (Rom. 13: 1—8) first through His divine providence in general but then too among His people, Israel, by specific command (Deut. 16: 18; Ex. 18: 25; Num. 11: 11, 16, 17) and that the same seems still absolutely necessary as well for the observance of right and good order in social life as for the punishment of the evil and the protection of the good, and other like objects.

For this reason we hold ourselves in duty bound towards our lawful government to regard the same as God's servant for our good, to honor it with due reverence (1 Pet. 2: 12—21), to be obedient unto it in all things that are not in violation of God's commandments or of one's good conscience (Acts 4: 19, 20), to pay cheerfully and faithfully all proper taxes and assessments, and devoutly to pray for it (1 Tim. 2: 1—4; Jer. 29: 7), etc. All this we need to observe the more in all cases since we know that "promotion cometh neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south; but God is the judge: He putteth down one and lifteth up another" (Ps. 75: 6, 7) according as He will (Prov. 8: 15, 16), now to bless and now to chastise.

Should, however, such an office be conferred upon us, we would hesitate and would not dare to accept it,

not knowing the will of Christ as to how such office should be administered. (True, there are other things, too, in civil life concerning which we have no explicit direction, but they are less difficult and can more easily be ordered according to God's word). No direction whatever concerning it is found among all His commandments respecting the administration of His kingdom, nor among all the instructions of His apostles. (We know nothing as to how the government is to be instituted or how the office should be administered. This gives us reason to be scrupulous). Moreover when we consider that the Lord Jesus seems everywhere to warn His disciples against bearing rule according to the manner of the world (Matt. 20: 25, 26; Luke 22: 25—30; John 18: 36), as well as against all vengeance (Matt. 5: 39, 40; Rom. 12: 19), the swearing of oaths, and all worldly conformity, we consider it a very difficult matter to administer this office according to faith. We hold, too, that the power vested for a time in the Jewish Government (Deut. 17: 8—12; 2 Chron. 19: 5—11) is in Christ fulfilled, brought to an end and abolished (Matt. 5: 17; Eph. 1: 20—23; Col. 2: 15—23; 3: 16—25), and hence can not be applicable to Christ's people (Heb. 7: 12); on the other hand it seems to us no less calculated to arouse scruples when human laws are to be enforced which are at variance with the principles of civil law which God Himself laid down for Israel. (Cases occur which often cause judges to hesitate: Compare the present laws concerning theft and adultery with Ex. 22: 1; Lev. 20: 10).

For these various reasons we consider ourselves fortunate to be exempt from this most important and at best dangerous service (we regard it a favor not to be called or impressed into civil office) while at the same time we can live in peace and quiet under the protection of such a benign government, who though not recogni-

zing for themselves the difficulties mentioned (but rather seeing in their office a divine calling) have yet granted to us such great privileges and exemptions (exemption from oaths and military service) for which we can not thank God enough (1 Tim. 2: 1–4) and owe our government all reverence and love.

XXIX. Of Revenge and War.

We believe we do not err when by nature we judge that the avenging or retaliating of every injustice is but just. Nevertheless, it is certain that though the Lord our God permitted His people in the olden times to exercise revenge (Matt. 5: 38, 43), by reason of their hardness of heart (Matt. 19: 8), yet it primarily and properly belongs to God Himself (Rom. 12: 17–21; Heb. 10: 30; Lev. 19: 17—18; Deut. 32: 35) who also is alone able correctly and with exactness to judge of the measure of the evil and of the just punishment (Isa. 28: 17; Jer. 17: 10; Luke 12: 47, 48) for which we are often incapacitated by our imperfect knowledge, our unbridled self-love, and excited passions (Jas. 1: 20, Prov. 27: 4). For this reason, we believe, our Lord Jesus Christ, when He would establish His spiritual and heavenly kingdom in accord with the will of God as it was from the beginning, forbade to His followers not only all practice of revenge (Matt. 5: 38—44) but even all vindictiveness (1 John 3: 15), as did likewise His apostles after Him (Rom. 12: 19; 1 Thess. 5: 15; 1 Pet. 3: 9). On the contrary, He insisted on their putting in practice the law of love to a degree far in advance of the teaching of nature (Luke 6: 32, 33) or of the Jewish Rabbis (Matt. 5: 20), as well as on an exercise of patience that should be perfect (Jas. 1: 4) after His own example (2 Thess. 3: 5; 1 Peter 2: 21—23); that is, instead of violently resisting the evil with the object of destroying it, rather to suffer repeat-

ed wrong (Matt. 5: 38—40); rather put up with material loss and injustice than to be quick to quarrel (1 Cor. 6: 1—8); to render to no one evil for evil (Rom. 12: 17, 20) not even reviling for reviling (1 Pet. 3:9); but always to follow after that which is good both toward one another and toward all; to overcome by doing good (Rom. 12: 21); to manifest love even to our enemy: if he is hungry feed him, if he is thirsty give him drink (Prov. 25: 21, 22; Rom. 12: 20); to bless them that curse us; to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that do violence to us and persecute us. Only as we do this shall we be children pleasing to our Father in heaven (Matt. 5: 44—48), and true followers of Jesus Christ (John 12: 26), who when He was reviled, reviled not again, when He suffered threatened not, but committed all to Him that judgeth righteously (1 Pet. 2: 21—23), in all of which He left us an example that we should follow in His steps (Phil. 2: 5).

Hence it is, as we think, self-evident that the use of deadly weapons and the carrying on of warfare to the destruction of our enemies—and even of innocent ones who have not wronged us but upon whom in war often falls the burden of misery and sorrow—is entirely unseemly for a true follower of Jesus and therefore not allowed (Matt. 5: 39, 40, 43, 44; 2 Cor. 10: 3, 4). For we are persuaded that war, as we know it, can not possibly be carried on without manifestly violating the fundamental principles of Christ's kingdom (John 18: 36; Eph. 4: 31, 32) and without nurturing vice and practices contrary to those principles (Gal. 5: 19—21), whereby there is very often manifested the likeness of wild beasts and of devils, rather than of followers of the Lamb of God (Isa. 53: 7) and of those that show forth His excellencies (1 Pet. 2: 9).

We therefore hold that it is our duty carefully to

abstain from the use of all warlike weapons and from the above mentioned hostile resistance; that it is allowed to flee from the evil as much as is in our power (Matt. 10: 23), to adopt such measures against an enemy that without working to his destruction we may prevent and bring to naught his hostile purposes (Acts 23: 6—9), and by means of defensive reasoning and good words (John 18: 23; Acts 4: 8—13, 19,20) and manifold kindnesses to bring him to reflect and be at peace (Matt. 5: 25, 26; Luke 12: 58; Gen. 21: 25—27). Moreover, we are of the opinion that all malevolent treatment that we experience must serve to exercise us in the faith and patience of the saints, as we follow the example of Jesus Christ, His holy apostles, and many thousands of Christians in the early and later centuries, who when for conscience' sake they had to suffer adversities (Matt. 5: 10) experienced in this the grace of God making all things work for their good (Rom. 8: 28; 2 Cor. 1: 3—6; 4: 17, 18; 6: 10), not to mention that the merciful God often gives an issue and an escape (2 Cor. 11: 23—33) beyond all human thought (2 Cor. 1: 8—11; 2 Tim. 3: 11; 4: 17, 18). Besides all this, it was plainly prophesied that such a peaceful and non-resistent life (Matt 10: 16; Luke 10: 3) would be found among the subjects of Christ's kingdom (Isa. 2: 4; 11: 6—8; Micha 4: 1—3; Zech. 9: 9, 10). Wherefore we pray that this blessed kingdom may come (Matt. 6: 10) and come soon, Amen!

XXX. Of Oaths.

On the question of taking oaths we believe that though it is possible to take an oath with a devout purpose, as did the holy patriarchs at times (Gen. 14: 22, 23; 21: 30, 31) and as it was permitted under the Mosaic dispensation, God Himself being often represented as speaking in this human manner (Heb. 6: 13—17; Ps. 89:

35; 95: 11; 110: 4), yet such a practice is nowhere enjoined by a command of God (Ex. 20: 7; Lev. 19: 12) but simply defined and restrained (Ex. 22: 11). Thus it is evident that swearing, like divorce and some other practices, was in reality permitted because of the want of love and of the prevailing mistrust, and the increasing degeneracy among mankind. Wherefore the Lord Jesus, in order to correct also this violation of and deviation from the original purpose of God, entirely prohibited the use of oaths in His spiritual and heavenly kingdom, when He said: "But I say unto you, Swear not at all etc." (Matt. 5: 34—37).

The reason why we cannot regard these words as a prohibition simply of the frivolous and notorious habit of profane swearing, or of swearing in things of minor importance, but consider it far safer to regard them as doing away entirely with all swearing are, besides those already mentioned and others, the following: First, because the Lord Jesus is evidently not speaking against trivial swearing but refers to the legal use of the oath, as it was said to them of old time, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths" (obviously the Lord here refers to Ex. 20: 7 and Lev. 19: 12). Further because the Lord says,—"But I say unto you, Swear not at all—but let your speech be Yea, yea; Nay, nay, and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one." Further, because James, repeating the same words, adds: "But above all things, my brethren, swear not—neither by any other oath—that ye fall not under judgment" (James 5: 12). Again, because such a view does not forbid an earnest assertion of the truth of our statements, when the honor of God and the love for the truth calls for it—such as the Lord Jesus often made (John 14: 12) likewise the apostle Paul, now and then (Rom. 1: 9; 9: 1; 2 Cor. 1: 23; Gal. 1: 20; Phil.

1: 8), since Christ does not mean to say that one shall use no words except Yea and Nay, but that our Yea shall be yea, and since we cannot regard such manner of emphasis as in reality an oath but an intense effort, proceeding from a holy motive, to awaken attention and deepen the impression; and even if in a few instances (like 1 Thess. 5: 27) this should be found to have taken the form of an oath (which however is not conceded) it is well to observe that this was done by persons of unimpeachable truthfulness, and probably in the spirit of forbearance, but not to serve us as a pattern. Again, because it is far more commendable to keep our yea and nay as faithfully as though we had sworn to it; and this confidence in one's given word is in harmony with the kingdom of Jesus. Further, because by reason of the depravity of human nature it is to be feared that the very practice of making oath is taken by godless men as a cause for attaching no weight to simple assurances and making light of lying (Rev. 21: 27; 22: 15). Further, because the Christians of the first centuries in general seem to have understood these words thus, and we have on record the testimonies of almost all the old teachers of the church against the use of oaths.* Finally, because a look at civil life and the requirements of a well-regulated state does not seem to reveal the need of swearing, since godless and faithless men are not to be trusted even though they swear (Jer. 5: 2) and

*We find in the early church widespread disapprobation of the oath based on the declaration of Jesus and of James. One of the oldest testimonies is that of Justin Martyr. In the early part of the third century Basilides dies a martyr's death for refusing to swear. Irenæus gives a similar testimony. Basilius is very emphatic in his prohibition of the oath, but above all Chrysostom. Likewise Isidore Pelusius, also Theophylact and Euthymius, Hilarius and Hieronymus. In modern times Olshausen and Stirus.

such persons have often so little fear of an oath that it is known full well beforehand and afterwards established that false oaths are sworn without number, a fact that causes godly rulers as well as true Christians in general to sigh, and which makes it necessary in spite of the use of the oath, to provide civil punishment for the untruthful.

As for ourselves, we hold that if under our solemn affirmation of the truth, which is put in place of the oath, we should deal faithlessly or fail to come up to our word, we are just as guilty and subject to just punishment as though we had sworn the heaviest oaths. It behooves us indeed to excel in this respect and thus to confirm our testimony with our acts, and it is therefore not to be feared that through our abstaining from the oath good order and fidelity shall suffer even in the least.

XXXI. Of Marriage.

We believe that the married state should be held in honor by all (Heb. 13: 4) and that it is not only permitted but also needful (Gen. 1: 28), expedient (Gen. 2: 18—24; Prov. 18: 22), and well pleasing to God (Matt. 19: 4—6), if it is entered upon in the true spirit (Gen. 24; Prov. 19: 14; 31: 10—30; 1 Cor. 7: 39) and so continued in (Eph. 5: 22—33). We are assured of this through the fact of God's own appointment (Gen. 2: 18—24), and the reaffirming of the same (Mark 10: 3—12) and through the action of Jesus, who hallowed a marriage by His presence (John 2: 1—11), as well as through the example of the most eminent saints who, living in a married state, walked with God (Gen. 5: 22) and had the testimony that they pleased God (Heb. 11: 5), including even the priests (Lev. 21: 7—9), the highpriest (Lev. 21: 13—15), the prophets (e. g. David, Ezekiel, Hosea) and the

apostles of the Lord (1 Cor. 9: 5; Matt. 8: 14). It appears indeed that the teaching of the Bible holds this state to be expedient for overseers in the church (1 Tim. 3: 2, 12; 5: 9, 10; Tit. 1: 6) wherefore we are certain that the throwing of suspicion on the married state proceeds from superstition and the prohibiting of it is anti-Christian and an abomination (1 Tim. 4: 3).

On the general question involved the will of God concerning this state is clearly expressed, viz., that only two persons free from all others and not of too close blood relationship may enter into it, to be united and bound together without any reserve even unto death (Mat. 19: 5; Eph. 5: 28). The separation of such is, moreover, altogether prohibited except for the cause of fornication (Matt. 5: 31, 32; 19: 7—10; 1 Cor. 7: 10, 11.)

Further, we believe that in cases of marrying as in all things, the Lord our God directs and disposes—yet so as not thereby to annul man's freedom—be it that He in His goodness graciously brings them about (Gen. 24: 14, 50; Matt. 19: 6; Josh. 23: 12, 13) or that He in His righteous displeasure and chastisement permits them (e. g. Judg. 14: 3, 4, 14; 1 Kings 11: 1—6; Ezra 9: 10—15; Neh. 13: 23—27). Therefore marriage is not to be regarded as an explicit general command (Matt. 19: 11, 12; 1 Cor. 7: 7, 17, 27, 28) or as a universally ordained destiny, but as a thing in which man may act with freedom, so far as this is not limited by God's holy directions, and that it be in the Lord (1 Cor. 7: 39). These limitations are clearly to be seen in the prohibition of marriage with unbelieving persons (Gen. 24: 14, 50; Matt. 19: 6; Josh. 23: 12, 13); the transgression of God's repeated command in this respect (Gen. 6: 1—3; 26: 34, 35; 27: 46) and God's holy displeasure thereat (1 Kings 11: 1—9); and in the necessity of putting away the strange wives out of Israel in order that the enkindled wrath of the

Almighty might be turned from them (Ezra 9: 10—15; 10: 1—19; Neh. 13: 23—28) as well as many occurrences showing the evil and hurtful consequences of carnal marriages in which only the natural passions are followed (Luke 17: 26—28).

For this reason it is exceedingly important that a person purposing either to enter this state or to abstain from it should examine himself, consider well his qualities, in faith seek to know God's will concerning himself (1 Cor. 7: 12—17), take counsel of God and His word (Prov. 3: 6; Ps. 119: 9—11; Phil. 4: 6, 7), and not decide upon one or the other course until in faith and with a good conscience he is convinced that in that course he will be well pleasing unto the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 10: 31; 2 Cor. 5: 9, 10; Col. 3: 17). Those who thus marry have good reason to hope that it is in the Lord and that His blessing will accompany it.

If matrimony is thus begun in the fear of the Lord and conducted in a Christian manner (Eph. 5: 22—33) in accordance with the principles of the Gospel, as laid down for the direction of both husbands and wives (1 Tim. 2: 8—13; Tit. 2: 3—8; 1 Pet. 3: 1—7), then shall the man, who is the head of the woman, strive to be a worthy copy of Jesus Christ in His relation to His church. The wife shall be saved through the childbearing (1 Tim. 2: 15, R. V.), her seed shall be blessed (Gen. 18: 18, 19; Eph. 6: 4) and all things shall work together for good to them (Matt. 6: 33; Rom. 8: 28).

That this married life may be a happy one we consider it essential, as much as possible, to remain within one's own church communion (after the example of the patriarchs, Gen. 24: 3, 4; 28: 1—8: Rom. 15: 5, 6; Phil. 2: 1, 2) to avoid disgraceful contentions and many unpleasant consequences which are so apt to arise out of differences in the bringing up, in the manner of life,

and in intellectual views (as exemplified in 1 Cor. 3: 4) and which crop out when it comes to bringing up their own children as well as in other things, being often discovered too late. It is therefore not only proper but also to their advantage for young people to counsel—next to God—with their parents and other intimate relatives, listen to their advice and not to grieve them but rather give them cause for joy (Prov. 10: 1). But everything in the fear of the Lord.

XXXII. Of Death.

Of the state of the soul after this life and the necessity of a godly preparation for a blissful departure.

That it is appointed unto man once to die (Heb. 9: 27; Ps. 89: 48) is, we believe, a result of the transgression of our first parents (Rom. 5: 12—14; Gen. 2: 17; 3: 19; 1 Cor. 15: 21) and is thus in reality a punishment for sin (Rom. 6: 23). But we also believe that through the obedience and death of Jesus Christ (Rom. 5: 19; Heb. 2: 14, 15; Isa. 25: 8) the sting of death has been removed (1 Cor. 15: 55—57; Hos. 13: 14) for all them that truly believe on Him (John 6: 40, 50, 51, 58); so that these need not fear death (Heb. 2: 14, 15; Isa. 25: 8), but can thank God through Jesus Christ that it is their's sometime to die. For though our body—which, be it remembered, is of the earth (Gen. 2: 7; Eccl. 12: 7), polluted through sinful lusts (Rom. 7: 5, 23, 24; 2 Cor. 7: 1), and altogether unfitted for heaven without great change (1 Cor. 15: 36, 50; Phil. 3: 21) — continues under the necessity of a return to its first element (Rom. 8: 10), and though such a thought is indeed appalling to them that live after the flesh (Rom. 8: 6, 13; Luke 12: 16—21) and are the servants of sin (Rom. 6: 16; 2 Cor. 5: 10; Heb. 10: 31), yea, also to the godly in a certain degree after the physical

nature; yet to the believer the thought of death brings true comfort (1 Thess. 4: 17, 18) amid the hardships (Jas. 5: 7, 8; 2 Cor. 4: 17, 18; 5: 1—9) and imperfections (1 Cor. 13: 8—12; 1 John 3: 2) of this earthly life, knowing that to be absent from the body and at home with the Lord, to be set free and be with Christ, is by far better (2 Cor. 5: 6—8; Phil. 1: 20—23), and finally that the putting of the body in the earth like the grain of wheat (John 12: 24) is the divinely ordained way to the reaping of better things (1 Cor. 15: 35—44).

As to the soul, the immortal nature of which has already been spoken of under article fifth, we believe that the same immediately upon its release from the body, returns to God—not to the full and final condition of glory or punishment (Matt. 25: 46; Jude 6) for this will come only after the resurrection of the body and the reunion of the soul with the same, in the day of the final judgment (Matt. 25: 34—46)—but to a lively anticipation of that state (Luke 16: 23, 24; Rev. 6: 10, 11) though in greater or less measure (Luke 12: 47, 48; 2 Peter 2: 9, 10) according to the degree of unrighteousness (Matt. 10: 15; 11: 22, 24) and estrangement from God (Matt. 25: 30; Luke 13: 24—30), or of holiness (2 Tim 2: 20—22) and intimate union with Him (John 14: 21—23; 15: 10; 17: 23, 24; 1 Cor. 15: 58; 2 Pet. 1: 8), as it evidently follows from the justice of God (Gal. 6: 7, 8; 2 Cor. 9: 6) and the nature of the case. (With many their conscience bears witness to this even while they seek to deafen it, Rom. 1: 21—25, how much more when it awakes, Luke 16: 23; Isa. 57: 21). The ungodly and unconverted sinners pass at death to a condition of imprisonment (2 Pet. 2: 4, 9, 17), of regret that is too late, of chagrin and pain (Isa. 66: 24; Matt. 18: 34; Mark 9: 48). Those who die in the Lord (Rev. 14: 13) pass to a condition of comfort (Luke 16: 25), of peace

and happiness (Luke 23: 43). In this state of being, kept by the hand of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1: 18; 3: 7), they await either in fear (Matt. 8: 29; Heb. 10: 27) or with desire (2 Pet. 3: 12—14) the last sentence or final judgment. For of a purging of the soul after death (as taught by the Roman church) we confess to know nothing, but rather that the judgment is connected with death (Heb. 9: 27) and that the tree will lie as it falls (Eccl. 11. 3; Luke 16: 22, 23).

It is therefore of the utmost importance that we seek to prepare for the hour of death in time (John 9: 4) while it is yet to-day (Heb. 3: 15) not only by a solemn contemplation of these things (Deut. 32: 29; Ps. 39: 4, 5; Ps. 90) but also by a true conversion (Acts 9: 1—18; 1 Pet. 2: 25) and a striving after faith and holiness (1 Tim. 6: 11; 2 Tim. 2: 22; Heb. 12: 14), to be found in Christ (Phil. 3: 9—14), to have always a conscience void of offence (Acts 24: 16; 1 John 3: 20, 21), to do gladly and with our might what our hands find to do (Eccl. 9: 10), and whatever there is more of like import (Phil. 4: 8). All this because (being repeatedly warned of the Lord, Mark 13: 37) we know not at what time or hour He will come (Matt. 24: 42; 25: 13; Luke 12: 35—46), that we may always be ready as those that wait for their Lord that we may not be ashamed at His coming (2 John 2: 28) but may be found of Him in peace without spot, and blameless (2 Pet. 3: 14).

Seeing moreover that for this most necessary and most important preparation very much is required, namely, that we look forward to death in faith as to a messenger of peace (Luke 2: 29, 30), regard the putting off of our body as a deliverance (2 Tim. 4: 6) and a redemption (Rom. 8: 23) and commit our spirit with a well-founded calmness of mind unto the hands of God as our heavenly Father and of Jesus Christ as our dear

Redeemer (Acts 7: 58), we need to this end nothing less than saving faith (John 3: 14, 15; 6: 40), true peace with God (Rom. 5: 1) a resignation to His will (Matt. 6: 10; 26: 39; Phil. 1: 20—23), a relinquishing of all earthly things (Phil. 3: 7—11; Heb. 11: 13), the experience of His love (Rom. 5: 5), and the comfort of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 5: 5; Rom. 8: 15, 16). These all being gifts of grace bestowed on us by reason of the obedience and death of our dear Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5: 17; 8: 37; 2 Cor 5: 15; 2 Tim. 1: 10), we must seek these gifts in persevering prayer, moved throughout by a lively realization of our dependence, and then receive and acknowledge them in such measure as the Lord may impart to us, in deep humility, as His undeserved mercy (Ps. 103: 10—14; 32: 6, 7).

XXXIII. Of the Resurrection of the Dead.

That the great mystery (1 Cor. 15: 51) of the resurrection was revealed and known to the saints in the old dispensation (Dan. 12: 2), though less clearly than to us (Heb. 11: 13—16), we know from the words of Christ when He said, to the confusion of the Sadducees: "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God." "God is not the God of the dead but of the living" (Matt. 22: 29, 32; Mark 12: 24, 26, 27). The same is also evident from the many tokens and testimonies that they lived and died in this faith. This fundamental doctrine (Heb. 6: 1, 2) has however been set forth in a much clearer light through the Gospel (2 Tim. 1: 9, 10), by which we now know definitely that before the final judgment there is to be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust (Acts 24: 15) so that all men that ever lived and died, whether buried on land or in the sea (John 5: 28, 29; 1 Cor. 15: 21, 22; Rev. 20: 12, 13) shall awake and be made manifest (John 6: 39;

Ezek. 37: 1—14).

As to the possibility of such an occurrence, surpassing all human thought, our faith rests not only on the above mentioned and many other clear testimonies, but on the omnipotence (Matt. 19: 26; Luke 1: 37; Zech. 8: 6), justice, and faithfulness of Him who has promised and will perform it (Heb. 10: 23; Num. 23: 19), namely God the Father (Rom. 4: 17; Deut. 32: 39) through His Son Jesus Christ (2 Co. 4: 14; John 6: 40; Phil. 3: 21) in the all-availing power and working of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8: 11), seeing that He to whom nothing is impossible who calls into being that which is not (Rom. 4: 17) should much less find it impossible to call them of whom the seed yet remaineth (1 Cor. 15: 35—44; John 12: 24). This faith rests further on the cases of those who in times past were raised from the dead (John 11: 23, 44), and especially on the resurrection of our Lord Himself (1 Cor. 15: 12—18), for in that He was thus declared the Son of God with power (Rom. 1: 4), having power to take His life again (John 10: 18) we can with confidence rely on His word (John 6: 54; 14: 19) knowing that He is our Redeemer (Job. 19: 25, 26) and that He as the first fruit (1 Cor. 15: 20—23; Rom. 11: 16; Acts 26: 23) and the Head of the church (Col. 1: 18) not only can but without fail will fulfill all His promises (Rev. 1: 18).

Concerning the way and manner, how all this shall take place, we see from the word of the Lord, that Christ Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and with the trump of God (1 Thess, 4: 16) accompanied by the angels of His power (2 Thess. 1: 7; Matt. 25: 31); that then all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment (John 5: 29); that this shall

take place with the same bodies in which they have thus lived (Isa. 26: 19; Rom. 8: 11) yet so changed and made incorruptible (1 Cor. 15: 53, 54) that they can either live forever in bliss or continue in eternal woe; that these changes shall take place instantly as in the twinkling of an eye, and yet each in his own order (1 Cor. 15: 23), for they that have died in Christ shall rise first and they that are yet alive and remain shall be changed likewise (1 Thess 4: 16).

Finally, as regards the time of this coming of the Lord (1 Thess. 3: 13; Jas. 5: 7, 8; 2 Pet. 3: 12), it shall be in the last day (John 6: 39, 44, 54) immediately before the last judgment, when the Lord shall come to hold judgment, the day and hour of which it is not for us to know (Matt. 24: 36; Mark 13: 32; Acts 1: 7). For though there are various prophecies and signs of the times given (Matt. 24: 1—38), which we are to observe with deep reverence and which seem to indicate that the time of the end is near at hand (Dan. 12: 4—9; 1 Tim. 4: 1—3; 2 Tim. 3: 1—5; 2 Pet. 3: 3—18), yet it must be preceded by the transpiring of great things,—there is, nevertheless, nothing more certain than that the Lord will come in an hour when men will not be looking for Him (Matt. 24: 44) and in a time when thoughtlessness and worldly-mindedness shall predominate in the world (Matt. 24: 37—39; Luke 18: 8; 1 Thess. 5: 2, 3; 2 Tim. 3: 1—5), wherefore the Lord Jesus so often admonishes always to watch, as has been more fully set forth in the foregoing article.

XXXIV. Of the Final Judgment.

That in immediate connection with the aforenamed resurrection of the dead the final and general judgment will take place, we believe,—first because of the idea of God's justice so deeply impressed on the conscience of

all men that the consciousness of evil fills us with fear Rom. 2: 15; Gen. 42: 21, 22), and, on the contrary, the consciousness of good inspires a heartfelt confidence (1 John 3: 20, 21), and this in such a manner that even the most godless can scarcely and at most only for a time deaden the impression (Isa. 57: 20, 21; Rom. 6: 13—17); secondly, because we do not always see justice carried out in this life (Ps. 73) and are thus led to look for it in the hereafter (Eccl. 8: 11—13; 2 Cor. 5: 10), since the above-mentioned idea can in no wise be denied or gotten rid of (Rom. 1: 19; 2: 15), for which reasons all intelligent peoples in all ages, even though being without special divine revelation, have believed in a coming judgment. Our belief in this rests still much more on the explicit statements found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament (Eccl. 12: 14; 11: 9; Dan 7: 9, 10; 12: 1—3; Mal. 4: 1) and more especially in those of the New.

The one who is to hold this great judgment is God, the Father (Acts 17: 31; Rom. 3: 6) the Judge of all (Heb. 12: 23); yet it will be through Jesus Christ, His Son (Acts 10: 42) to whom He has committed all judgment (John 5: 22, 27) because of His willing humiliation and His obedience even unto death (Phil. 2: 6—11) by which He, as mediator between God and man (1 Tim. 2: 5; Heb. 12: 24), has obtained the right (Ps. 2: 8—12) to rule over all (Ps. 72: 8; John 5: 27). Wherefore He will show His kingly power not only to His friends (Matt. 25: 34; 28: 18—20) but also to His foes (Luke 19: 27; Rev. 1: 7) as it is written,—"That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2: 10—11).

Those who shall be judged are all nations as a whole (Matt. 25: 31—32) and every individual person in

particular, be he great or small (Rev. 20: 12, 13) rich or poor (Gal. 2: 6; 1 Pet. 1: 17; Luke 16: 19) the greatest monarch as well as the humblest beggar, yea also the fallen angels (Matt. 25: 41; 2 Pet. 2: 4; Jude 6; Rev. 20: 10).

The manner of the appearing of the great judge, Jesus Christ, at His coming in judgment will be in the highest degree terrible, and the bringing of all nations before His judgment seat, without any escape (Matt. 24: 29, 30); for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven (1 Thess. 4: 16) with the clouds of heaven (Rev. 1: 7; Dan. 7: 13, 14), with great power and glory (Luke 9: 26; 21:25—27), with ten thousands of His saints (Jude 14, 15), and all the holy angels with Him, amid accompanying circumstances so mighty that all nature will be moved and amazed (2 Pet. 3: 10). When He shall thus sit upon the throne of His glory before the eyes of all, even of His bitterest enemies, then shall the angels of His power (Matt. 13: 41—43; 2 Thess. 1: 7) gather before His judgment seat all nations to give account (Rom. 14: 12; Matt. 25) of the time (Rev. 3: 3; Luke 19: 44), the means (Luke 16: 2; Matt. 11; 20—24; Heb. 2: 1—4) and the gifts which they have received (Luke 12: 47—48).

Moreover, the things concerning which account shall be required are not only a few of the most prominent actions of men, but every one of them in particular, subjective as well as objective (Heb. 4: 12, 13), not only words (Matt. 12: 36, 37; Jude 15) and deeds (Rom. 2: 6; Rev. 2: 23) but even the hidden thoughts (1 Cor. 4: 5) and inclinations of the heart (Rom. 2: 16).

The standard of judgment will be perfect righteousness itself (Isa. 28: 17; Ps. 9: 8; 96: 10; 98: 9) which belongs to this great Judge as an essential quality (Ps. 45: 7, 8; Heb. 1: 8, 9) by which He is always known (Gen. 18: 25). And His judgment is unerring (Ps. 139:

1—13; Isa. 29: 15, 16), since He is the omniscient one (John 2: 25; Heb. 4: 13) the searcher of all hearts (Acts 1: 24) before whom no manner of false plea or any pretence can in the least avail (Matt. 7: 22, 23). Moreover, He will judge with exactness (Dan. 5: 27; Prov. 24: 12) according to that which is written in the books of His omniscience (Mal. 3: 16), of conscience (Rom. 2: 15), and of divine revelation (John 12: 48; 5: 45), in each case according to the circumstances under which the person has lived (Rom. 2: 12) and after the measure of the gifts he received and the means and opportunities he had of obtaining the same (Matt. 13: 16, 17) as well as the use or abuse or total neglect of them (1 Cor. 3: 10—15).

All this shall proceed on the basis of the covenant of grace (John 3: 14—18; 5: 24) by virtue of which they who sincerely believe (Rom. 8: 1) who earnestly strive after that which is good (1 Cor. 9: 24—27; Phil. 3: 7—14; Heb 12: 14) and do the same (1 John 2: 4, 29; 3: 4—10) even though in weakness (Ps. 103: 10—14; 1 John 1: 6—10) and amid much stumbling (Jas. 3: 2; Ps. 37: 24), will obtain mercy for Christ's sake (Jude 21; Rom. 6: 23); those however who continue in unbelief and obey not the truth but obey unrighteousness, unto them shall be wrath and indignation (Rom. 2: 4—8).

As to the award of this righteous judgment we see that Jesus Christ the great Judge shall bring together as His chosen ones those who shall be found to be His sheep (John 10: 27, 28), who have done good and have been faithful in a very little (Luke 16: 10; 19: 17), and shall set them on His right hand receiving them with this most gracious greeting: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world". But those who have done evil and not good (whose names are not found in the book of life, Rev. 3: 5; 20: 15; 21: 27), set on His left

hand as the servants of unrighteousness, He shall banish from His presence with these most terrible words: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

The time when this final judgment shall take place the Father has put in His own power (Mark 13: 32—37; Acts 1: 7) but upon us He enjoins a life of pious preparation and watchfulness in the fear of God (Luke 21: 34—36).

XXXV. Of Eternal Life.

The kingdom which the blessed shall inherit in the day of the final judgment (Matt. 25: 34) we understand (1 John 3: 2) to be in general a condition of joy (Matt. 25: 21; Ps. 16: 11; Isa. 51: 11;) and glory (1 Pet. 1: 4) far exceeding our conceptions in this life of humble limitations (1 Tim. 6: 16). For this reason the Holy Spirit, in order to help our infirmity, speaks of it throughout figuratively, in terms of such things as in this life are esteemed the most agreeable and delightful (Matt. 8: 11; 22: 2; Heb. 11: 10; Rev. 19: 7; chaps. 21 and 22).

To speak of it more in particular, we believe that it will consist in a life of eternal and heavenly bliss (Luke 15: 7; Rev. 19: 7), imperishable and unfading, which will be enjoyed under conditions of perfect delight and satisfaction in soul and body, spoken of as a fullness of joy in God's presence and pleasures at His right hand forevermore.

The body will be freed from all its present imperfections and infirmities, altogether changed (Phil. 3: 21), spiritual, heavenly (1 Cor. 15: 40—44, 49, 50), shining in glory (Matt. 13: 43), fashioned like unto the glorified body of Jesus Christ in heaven.

In no less degree will the soul be set free from all that is yet painful and grievous (Rev. 7: 16; 21: 4) and

on the contrary will be clothed with all the perfection of which it is capable, both in knowledge (1 Cor. 13: 9—13) and in glory (2 Thess. 2: 14; 1 Pet. 5: 10; Rev. 21: 27), perfectly at one with God, and thus transformed into that image of glory (2 Cor. 3: 18) toward which the upward progress in this life is but as the beginning, though its consummation be sought with longing desire (2 Cor. 5: 1, 2; Rom. 8: 23).

The place of this blissful state is heaven, where God dwells (Isa. 57: 15; John 14: 2), a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God, of which the greatest glory on earth is but a shadow.

Though there will be degrees of glory (1 Cor. 3: 8), some shining as the sun (Dan. 12: 3; Matt. 13: 43) others as the stars, even as also one star differeth from another in glory, according as they suffered much and contended rightly (2 Tim. 2: 5—12; 1 Cor. 15: 58; Rev. 3: 4, 5) or have excelled in holiness and zeal (2 John 8; Rev. 2: 17; 3: 12), yet each one according to his capability will be filled and satisfied.

The company of the blessed will be extremely delightful. First there will be the perfectly blessed and all-sufficient God (Matt. 5: 8; 1 Joh. 3: 2; Rev. 21: 3), and Jesus Christ as the Lamb that was slain (Rev. 5: 6; John 12: 26; 14: 3; 17: 19—24), then the holy angels of God (Rev. 7: 11; Heb. 12: 22—24) together with all just men made perfect from Eden to the end of the world (Luke 13: 28—30). Among all these there will not be found the least contention or disagreement, but on the contrary, the fullest accord (Rev. 5: 8—14; 7: 9—12) and the most passionate love (1 John 4: 7—21). In all probability they will know each other (Matt. 17: 3; Luke 16: 19—31) and also communicate to one another their knowledge, their experiences, and their enjoyments, all

of which will be the source of unspeakable joy (Ps. 79: 13).

The bleesed will be occupied largely in beholding unveiled all the perfections of God (Ps. 63: 3—6; Ex. 34: 5—8) and Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and man, and all the divine providences and works both in nature and in grace, especially the work of redemption (Rev. 1: 5) as well as that of conversion and sanctification (Col. 1: 12), etc. Thus beholding all the wonderful things in God, in His saints, and especially in one's own self (Rev. 15: 34; 2 Thes. 1: 10; Tit. 3: 3—7; Eph. 2: 3—10) under the unbroken influence of the Spirit of glory, the overshadowing of the Almighty, and the guidance of the Lamb in the midst of the throne, both body and soul will be continually refreshed, and be absorbed in the delight of united and responsive praise, worship and glorifying (Rev. 7: 10—12) in all eternity.

XXXVI. Of Eternal Punishment.

Respecting the condition of those who in the final judgment will be condemned, we believe that it will be unhappy and terrible beyond all conception (Dan. 12: 2), because the Holy Spirit represents it throughout in terms of all that is dreadful and insufferable (Heb. 12: 29; Isa. 33: 14), speaking of it now as hell (Matt. 10: 28; 18: 9; 2 Pet. 2: 4) or the valley of the children of Hinnom where the idolatrous Israelites formerly cast their children as an offering into the glowing arms of Moloch to be burned with fire; then as a furnace of fire (Matt. 13: 50), a pit burning with fire and brimstone (Rev. 19: 20; 20: 10, 14, 15; 21: 8), an outer darkness (Matt. 25: 30), the gnawing of a worm that dieth not (Mark 9: 43—48) and fire that is not quenched (Matt. 3: 12), and more of like import (Matt. 18: 34). From all these dreadful representations we have every reason

to assume that that condition will be one of utter perdition from God (2 Thess. 1: 9; Matt. 7: 23; Luke 13: 27, 28), from all good, all comfort (Luke 16: 24, 25), and all salvation, as also a realization of the insufferable wrath of almighty God (Rev. 6: 16, 17) and His avenging justice (2 Thess. 1: 8; Heb. 10: 30, 31), both as to soul and body, without any hope of escape or relief in all eternity (Matt. 25: 46).

In their bodies, as we can conceive of it, the condemned will be standing without (Luke 13: 25) when the blessed have been caught up to meet the Lord in the air (1 Thess. 4: 17) when all the doors of hope and of escape both on earth and in heaven shall be shut (Matt. 25: 10), when all the elements, kindled with fire, will be burned up (2 Pet. 3: 10—12), the bottomless abyss opening to engulf alive these unhappy ones as were in their time Korah, Dathan and Abiram (Num. 16: 32, 33) and the Sodomites, they being thus consumed with the earth and all that is upon it that they loved (2 Tim. 3: 2—4; Ps. 17: 14; Luke 17: 26—30; 1 John 2: 15—17; 2 Pet. 3: 7), yet their changed bodies being indestructible, they are not annihilated (Rev. 9: 6) but will suffer the fire of eternal punishment.

Regarding the soul, they will not only, as said above, be separated by a great gulf from God and the blessed and from every sort of comfort, but will, moreover, be most painfully tormented, by the undying recollection of so many proffered means of grace (Matt. 11: 20—24), opportunities (Matt. 11: 28; 23: 37; Isa. 55), and convincing appeals of God's goodness (Acts 14: 17; Rom. 1: 16—25; 2: 1—24; Rev. 3: 20), and the wilful neglect and refusal of the same (Matt. 22: 5; Heb. 2: 3; 10: 29; Acts 13: 40—46) as well as all manner of unrighteous deeds. This consciousness with the consequent belated repentance, chagrin, and despair (Gen. 4:

13, 14; Matt. 27: 3—5), will cause a torment far exceeding all our present conception.

All this will be aggravated by the exceeding terribleness of the company of the devil and his angels (Matt. 25: 41) together with all wicked sinners (Gal. 5: 19—21; Eph. 5: 3—6; Jude 14—16; Rev. 22: 15) and by the sound of their blasphemies against God and all that is good (Rev. 16: 9, 11, 21). Moreover that which makes this unhappy condition most desperately terrible is the fact that the Holy Scriptures do not give the least ground to expect a release from the same, but on the contrary they call it an eternal punishment, an everlasting fire, an unquenchable fire, a worm that dieth not, etc.

However, it is certain that there will be degrees in these punishments (Luke 12: 47, 48) so that it will be more tolerable for them of Tyre and Sidon, and of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for such places and persons among whom the Lord has manifested himself with especial means of knowledge and convicting power (Matt. 12: 41, 42), such distinction being indeed a necessary part of the exercise of the most perfect justice, which will be manifested in this as in all other works of God (Gal. 6: 7, 8).

May He give us grace, that in the right way we may flee from this wrath to come! Amen.

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